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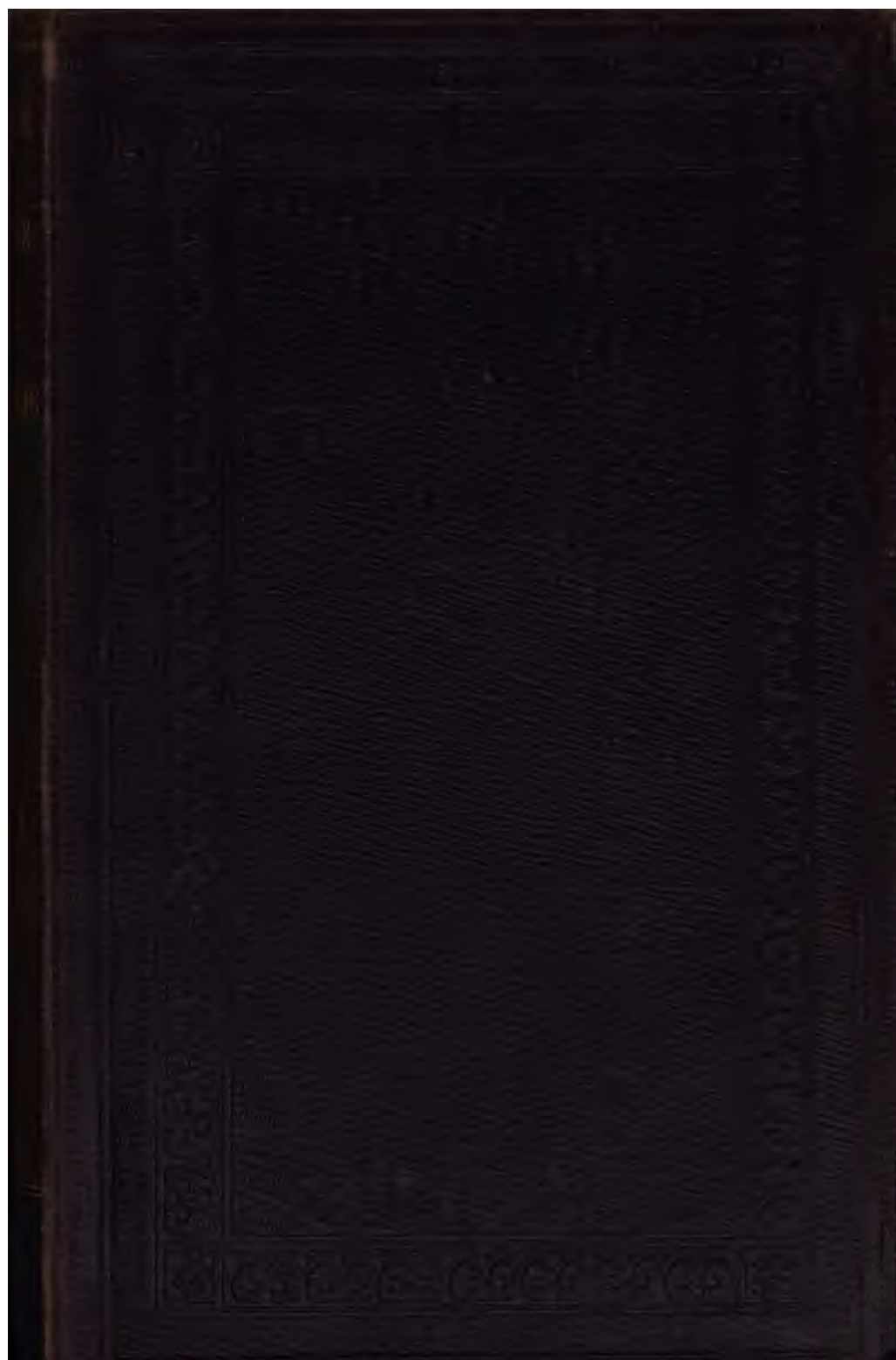
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AMBROSE THE SCULPTOR.

AMBROSE THE SCULPTOR:

AN

Autobiography of Artist Life.

BY

MRS. ROBERT CARTWRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "CHRISTABELLE," &c.

"Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
as a seal upon thine arm: for love is
strong as death; jealousy is cruel as
the grave: the coals thereof are coals
of fire, which hath a most vehement
flame."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN every age that has made certain approaches to civilisation there will exist a class of men whose natural susceptibilities and talents are considerably in advance of their fellows. The susceptibility to impression, whether from within or without, may be a gift of nature; the talent, or, in other words, the power of improving that gift and of imparting its results to others, may be partly natural and partly acquired, either by mere practice or by previous study. In either case, success must be in some degree the fruit of reflection,—of analysis of the objects which the mind has compassed, and which the will seeks to retain or to perpetuate,—of frequent careful reconsideration to prove to its own satisfaction by repeated trial the truth of its conceptions.

Such mental exercise cannot but elevate the man who schools his faculties to its discipline, and no matter in what early or simple state of society he may be placed, will raise him to a higher rank of culture and intellectual advancement than that of the majority of his fellow-men.

The usual subjects of archaic or early Art conspire with these circumstances to fix the position of the Artist. Heroic art, historical monuments, religious rites,—all demand his aid : he is of necessity connected with all that a simple and earnest people hold most sacred and most dear. Hence the severe character of very early Art.

But this exercise of the inventive and imitative powers of man, tinctured as it may have been with superstition and many other characteristics which later cultivation and a finer perception of the beautiful and the correct have rejected, could not go on very long without awakening in the workman,—the term is not derogatory,—a stronger love for his work, and a deeper insight into the principles by which he must be guided in bringing it, by slow steps perhaps, nearer and nearer to his idea of perfection. For in true genius the idea will ever be

beforehand with the work. Art, in its high sense, is the idea united with the execution : high Art, in that high sense, is the idea guided by Genius happily united with Execution directed by Skill.

Now, to bring this union of qualifications to bear its full fruit, genius must submit to the discipline of instruction, and execution to the toil of practice. And all this cannot be done without severe labour of mind and body ; but the result is a great Artist, —in a word, a great man. Then, arrived at the higher walks of his career, the earnest labourer in his vocation, suddenly awakened to the full majesty, the true nobility of Art, in its mission of conveying to the senses and to the mind the symmetries of form, the impressions of poetry, the beauties of nature, presses onward in the study which now for the first time is opened to him. He contemplates Art for its own sake, discovers new principles, dives into the mysteries of science, and begins to perceive that even on æsthetic grounds he must dip far beneath the surface in order to understand not only how, but why, he pleases others in his works, even when he may not please himself : how he may

sometimes fail to please others, even when he himself is satisfied.

In these investigations the deepest powers of thought must be brought into play: the mind must be tutored ere it can properly compose or invent. Simple works of art may be produced once, or seldom, by a stroke of native genius; but the untought genius is frequently unable to reproduce its own work. But with the faculties of mind well taught, and the skilful hand well practised, the accomplished Artist will not only invent and combine in infinite variety, but will do something to extend the limits of Art itself.

These phases of Art present diversity of character according to the times and countries,—the nations and individuals,—the subjects and ideas with which they are connected. But they always employ the finest minds,—the choicest spirits of their respective eras.

Are such gifted men, then, to be honoured amongst us? Have such men not in every age been found worthy of all honour? Do not the names of Apelles, Phidias, Raphael, M. Angelo,

Bramante, Wren, and many others, attest it? In old times : but are they now so honoured, especially in England? The question is not new, and has been answered, Yes, and No.

Art is great, intrinsically great. It may advance from rude beginnings,—develop itself from simple germs,—improve in its scope and in its details,—may become stationary, retrograde, degenerate, and recover itself again.

Art is a life, not of one man but of generations : it is a history of mind and men. But one man can embrace in his career but a small portion of the long progress of art. Every artist must begin, and it is long before he can reach even the outskirts of high art. Can the patronage, the honour which is willingly and deservedly bestowed on the profession and the highest names in it, be indiscriminately lavished on the working majority ere they have attained the eminence of fame? It is impossible : general patronage is all the majority can look to until the celebrity of some work raises the name of its author to public notoriety. Now, this working part of his career is of necessity the greater part of

the life of the Artist,—and if he meets due honour in the latter half of his career, it is unreasonable to complain of neglect in the former portion when the pinnacles of fame were occupied by an older race.

It may be disheartening, but it is not cruel : it can hardly be ordered otherwise. The man who shows most mental courage in persevering through long years of severe training, and whose strong heart braves the suffering of disappointment and delay, has already proved that force of mind which is the highest moral qualification of an accomplished Artist.

The Author has been induced to make these observations in favour of a class whose talents and attainments entitle them to a degree of social distinction to which they have not as yet been admitted in some of the most liberal countries of Europe. Sympathizing deeply with their feelings, honouring their spirit of independence, and admiring their abilities ;—persuaded, moreover, of their high vocation towards the good of mankind, by the power which art confers on its gifted votaries of calling

forth the noblest inspirations of which human nature is capable ;—she offers her convictions to the reader with the hope that they may be considered as not without weight, even though recommended through the medium of a work of fiction.

Craven Hill, Hyde Park,
May 1854.

AMBROSE THE SCULPTOR.

CHAPTER I.

Oh la vile chose et abjecte que l'homme ! s'il ne s'élève au-dessus de l'humanité.—MONTAIGNE.

That man of genius who thinks he can tamper with his glorious gifts, and for a season indulge in social excesses, stoop from his high calling to the dregs of earth, abandon himself to the stream of common life, and trust to his native powers to bring him up again ;—O believe it, he plays a desperate game !—one that in nearly ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is fatal.—MRS JAMESON.

LETTER FROM FRANCIS LOCKWOOD TO AMBROSE ARNOLD THE SCULPTOR.

YOU asked me, during our late conversation, what was the reason of my sudden silence, and of the gravity of my manner after the cheerful intercourse of the happy evening which we spent together lately.

I was unable to answer, and I left you dissatisfied with myself at my want of readiness to reply to my benefactor. Yes, my revered teacher, you, to whom I owe all the insight I have yet gained into the recesses of Art, *you* have a right to question me ; and it is my duty to answer you freely.

You will remember that the tenour of our conversation had been directed to the philosophy of Art, and that you had enlarged in a manner peculiar to yourself, and delightful to me your attached scholar, upon the unknown, the unregistered feelings of the Artist, in inventing and carrying on to perfection any work worthy of a man of genius. It was, you said, but a tithe of the power of the mind that came to be exhibited before the public, in the shape of any given work of Art in any of its branches ; it was sad to think how the deep thought, the weary study, the frequent change and correction of ideas, which result in this or that picture or statue, are lost with regard to even those who take a true delight in Art's productions. How doubly lost, then, to the vast, unreflecting multitude, who, charmed with the execution, dream not of the labour, or of the conflict of spirit and necessity, which the Artist

is doomed to undergo in working for their superficial pleasure.

My unexplained sadness arose from the reflection, that all these struggles of the mind, which give the real value of his dearest labours to the Artist, should be lost to future schools; and in particular, that your own experience of what may be called the moral or inner soul of our profession should not be put on record for admirers, for such there will be, of your genius, yet unborn. In a word, that you would permit Francis Lockwood, the humblest of your pupils, to write, for the benefit of posterity, all he has treasured up of your conversations, enriched with as much as you would kindly impart to him of the history of your life and of your professional career. He knows the boldness of his request, as well as the arduous nature of the task; he solicits it with reverence, he will execute it with affection: fearing that were the life of one so celebrated to be undertaken by a less devoted pen, it would fail of meeting with that full justice which the heart of a grateful scholar can alone supply.

F. L.

ANSWER FROM AMBROSE ARNOLD TO FRANCIS
LOCKWOOD.

It is with no common feelings that I reply, my dear pupil, to your kind and affectionate letter. You have touched with tenderness and delicacy on a topic which is usually one of the most irritating to those who have, like me, long passed the prime of life, and who see, with the sad infirmity of human nature, the inevitable goal to which they are approaching. I have long tried to master all such weakness, and have myself prepared a full narrative of the events of my chequered life, to which I have added here and there the remarks which naturally arise from my experience of good and evil, of fortune and misfortune, in the laborious career which I have followed.

You have full permission from me to make what use you think proper of the MS. which I send enclosed ; and I think that in intrusting this hitherto secret autobiography to the hands of my most attached and most promising scholar, I am consulting at once the interest of my own credit and reputation

as an Artist, and the reasonable wishes of one whom, at my age, I scruple not to call my last and most faithful friend. The difficult art of biography, however, is new to you ; and I request you to remember, in the little you may have of your own to add to the materials with which I now furnish you, that I have a strong objection to the flatteries and minutiae of all sorts, with their insignificant and trifling details, so constantly found in the lives now daily published ; and that I beg you to do no more than fill up the outline I have drawn. I have had many and deep afflictions, wherein I have found the love and study of Art the most obvious consolation ; high in itself and glorious, but still more glorious in that it opens to its votaries still higher views of Glories beyond our reach.

When the heart of man is sore, when his pride is humbled, when promises prove deceitful, and friendship treacherous, then come the soothing handmaids of Art and Science to elevate the suffering mind : then the soul soars high above the reach of detraction, and by the exaltation of the intellectual faculties which God has granted her, seizes a faint glimpse of that perfection at which she aims—feebly, per-

haps, but not in vain. This, my son, is the true spirit of Art ; this is the happiness of the Artist....

A. A.

MANUSCRIPT OF ARNOLD.

It is with small feelings of satisfaction that I endeavour to retrace the events of my earliest days, which were to me indeed days of little else but privation and sorrow. My first recollections dwell on the image of a mother—a kind, beauteous, sweet-tempered, loving mother, whose shade stands out in strong relief from the crowd of inferior beings by which she was surrounded. And then, my father... the little I remember of him and of his associates is so dark, so forbidding, that I do not willingly allow my thoughts to rest on the few particulars which the lapse of years has suffered to remain imprinted on my memory.

In my youth, our existence was so precarious, and my mother, on whom all domestic cares were left to press with double weight from the absence of sympathy where she might most have looked for it, was so taken up with providing for our wants,

that I went through the most precious years of life without anything that could be called education. Now, when I look back to those dark days, I marvel that I contrived to pick up the little instruction that I did in a state of alternate profusion and penury. For when money came in, there was profusion, extravagance so excessive, that sums which, well invested, might have made a decent provision for us, were squandered immediately in reckless prodigality, to be speedily followed by a recurrence of absolute want. The periods of distress, alas, were far more frequent and more lasting than those of affluence, if such it could be called in our unsteady circumstances.

Of all the painful feelings which the retrospect of those melancholy days brings back to my heart, the necessity, the absolute necessity, in candour and in truth, of casting blame, deep blame, on the conduct of a parent, is the most agonizing. At my present age, knowing, as a man should do, his own character, I feel that had my father been such as some parents are—such, in a word, as my mother deserved to meet with in a partner, I could have loved with the most devoted affection, I could have

sacrificed my life for such a parent. My heart yearns for the power of bestowing upon his remembrance the strong and sincere tribute of affection of which I feel that it is capable : it sinks into the lowest depths of humiliation, when I reflect that such affection is not due to the memory of him whom I ought to respect before all other men. This I was early sensitive enough to discover, and I brooded over the thought with grief and shame. But when I saw my mother, whose image was heaven to me, her only child, suffering under the rude maltreatment of her and my natural protector, —left to neglect, perhaps the least of her evils, and even to destitution, by *him*—my patience could bear it no longer, and I frequently fled the house for hours to weep alone, and exhaust in silence and in solitude the passion that would not be controlled. In his joyous, or, more properly speaking, his riotous moods, my father would be fond of me ; he would load me with caresses, and, had that long continued, would have spoiled me, considering what his habits were. He would teach me the rudiments of the art in which he excelled : he would sit for hours with pleasure to see me attempt to model the

plastic clay, or copy some bold design of his own in chalk upon the wall. My mother would look on in pleased, but fearful silence, ever delighted with the smallest symptom of returning love on his part exhibited to me or to herself. Yet the slightest interruption of these better moods, whether from the calls of his idle associates, or the temptations of pleasure, would put an end to the good so sparingly begun. Grim want alone would make him work, and then, as I was usually called in to give the slight manual assistance in my power, I contrived to learn as it were by fits and starts some further principles of his art, which at leisure moments, and during my father's too frequent and long absences from his studio, I practised alone with portions of his refuse materials. I could see that this steadiness in occupation gave the greatest pleasure to my poor mother which she was capable of enjoying. She encouraged me in my work, both as a means of forming my character to earnest labour, which there was no need to tell me must be my portion through life, and as a chance of my becoming sufficiently capable in a short time to add something by my own industry to the scanty

resources of the family. Dear, anxious, partial mother ! little did she know the long study, the severe practice, that are necessary for even a second-rate proficiency in Sculpture. The more progress I made, the more I became convinced that, although I might ultimately succeed, years must be spent in toiling up the hill of manual dexterity, ere I could venture to give the reins to any freedom of imagination or of composition which I might haply possess.

I attended a drawing-class by no means of the first order, but where I learnt something from the occasional visits of an artist who had once been my father's friend, and who kindly paid particular attention to me. At least after I had once begun, I never lost ground in my practice, and by degrees I advanced sufficiently in drawing to astonish my father by some specimens of my progress which accidentally fell under his eye. But it was too late ; a few years earlier, and he would have been proud of me, and would have done something towards bringing my infant talent to perfection. Now, however, the capability was past : he no longer worked steadily himself, and he was daily plunging himself and us more and more deeply in debt

and destitution. We left one humble lodging after another, the present always more humble than the last, till finally illness and misery, in their most awful shape, beset our squalid abode. My mother was pining away with grief, while I had but a bare nourishment.

It is painful to me to dwell upon this period of my life. I will pass over it as briefly as I can, though one dreadful scene remains so strongly engraven on my memory that I feel constrained to mention it to you. One evening I was sitting as usual with my mother in the loggia of our small house, which, as is commonly the case in Italy, looked out upon a garden not belonging to us, but by which we profited in the delicious perfumes of its jessamines and orange-trees, and in the cool breeze agitated by its murmuring fountain. Oh, those happy moments! too short for motherly affection, but long enough to give me a fixed love for all that is morally beautiful in woman, together with the persuasion that such alone should be the beauty that inspires the Sculptor's art. Judge, then, of my disagreeable surprise, when, as I was listening with love to the simple tales with which

she would ever amuse and instruct me—feeling as I did already, even at my young age, the soft influence of that virtue which it was her constant endeavour to instil into me—I heard the voice of my father calling to me :

“ Ambrogino—boy, where are you ? Come down ! come to your work, and learn ! Why sit you there, moping over saintly books ? Come to the studio, and learn to be a man ! Show your genius, ragazzo ! and leave all the stuff your mother teaches you to priests and fools ! ”

Sudden as the interruption was—for I knew not that my father was in the house—I yet knew the sharp tones of that voice too well to dare to disobey : besides, I did not dislike the labour of the studio, when my father was in a humour to impart to me the knowledge of his art. I hoped, too, by pleasing him with my proficiency, to draw off his attention from my poor mother, who always suffered, directly or indirectly, when her husband was excited. I immediately repaired to his presence. My mother, moved perhaps by some misgivings, followed me, and we reached the door together. We opened it, and passed the threshold at the same

moment. My father was sitting in a careless attitude, and apparently in rather a bad temper, before his unfinished group in clay of Hylas and the Nymphs, which was placed, half-fashioned into shape, upon a pedestal before him. He had the instrument used for moulding in his hand, and in wayward mood was dashing little bits of clay about the room. On a raised platform on his left hand, was placed in a recumbent position, her *pose* for one of the nymphs, a woman whose bold and fearless air would at any time have terrified me, naturally timid and broken by ill-treatment as I was, but whose loose and scanty dress, or rather undress, showed plainly that she was there in the capacity of what is called in artist's phrase, "the living model."

My mother, indignant at seeing the company to which my father would have introduced me, and knowing moreover the woman at first sight to be one notorious for profligacy even among the degraded class to which she belonged, drew back in unutterable disgust. Whether she said anything or not to irritate her unhappy husband, I never knew; but as she pulled me forcibly backward through the

door, my father started forward and seized me violently by the shoulder. I fell, fell at the feet of that horrid woman, whose diabolical laugh long sounded in my ears as the cry of an evil spirit. "*Hai tu dunque paura del nudo, poveretto,*" cried the repulsive creature—for repulsive she seemed to me, young and handsome though she was—as half-rising from her recumbent attitude, and without the slightest attempt at any arrangement of her thin drapery, she made a movement as if to approach me; when my mother, goaded almost to frenzy, and gaining the courage that virtue insulted feels in the presence of vice, stepped forward and dragged me by main force into her apartment. My father's rage was ungovernable—the last thing I saw was his arm uplifted, I knew not against whom,—but luckily it only fell, though with Herculean force, upon the half-shaped mass before him. Whether he meant to wreak his vengeance on the inanimate clay or not, may be doubtful, but having given the first blow, he now flew at it with redoubled violence, and soon reduced the lifeless mass, which was to have brought a large sum to his family, into a hundred fragments.

Work was at an end. I soon after heard him go out, followed by his worthless companion, and the sequel did but too well show into what society he must subsequently have fallen. My mother, in the deepest grief, clasped me to her bosom, called me her dearest, her beloved, her virtuous child, invoked heaven's blessings on my head, with prayer that I at least might be strengthened to shun evil company and to follow in the ways of peace. Albeit not unused to such trying scenes, in which her own trust in God and consciousness of pure and moral conduct alone supported her, she was now fairly worn out: she sank into a stupor, which was but a relief to nature.

I cannot recall those moments without a feeling of burning shame—but even that came to an end. My anxiety about my mother occupied me all night, and I watched the bright stars sink into early dawn with the sad prospect of passing another day, and perhaps many days, like the last. Suddenly, as I sat by my mother's couch, I was roused by a loud and fearful knocking at the door. The sun had not risen; my father had often returned home equally late: again louder knocks and cries. Our

servant ran in and cried, "*Signora, ecco gli sbirri!*" and in a few minutes some men in official costume had entered the lower apartment. I ran down stairs only in time to see the corpse of my father brought in on a plank, and placed in that studio, fraught with such harrowing recollection to me, where I had last seen him living. I cannot continue this dreadful theme. He had but just breathed his last, having been stabbed in a drunken broil among the lowest haunts of the Trastevere. Through the long lapse of years, how vividly arises the dread remembrance of that awful night before my shrinking soul!

CHAPTER II.

The composition of works of art, or of science, shows a prevalence of the individual factor; but the artist and man of science know that their most individual works are expressions of a common perception, and are therefore independent of self.—BUNSEN.

My poor mother, although she must long have foreboded some such catastrophe, was completely overwhelmed by this dreadful event. Well aware as I was of the penury of her resources, I was happily unconscious of the daily, hourly cares, entailed by the want of money upon that fond parent. I was ignorant that the provision for our very sustenance often depended entirely on her labours, which were carried on and maintained through hours of bodily suffering, studiously concealed from the child of her affection, lest his education, the prospect of which weighed as heavily at her heart as the struggle for

his subsistence, should suffer diminution or neglect. Dear, loving mother! Ah, when I bent over that wasted form, that pale and care-worn countenance, half-stilled in the stupor of unconsciousness, my distress seemed too great for endurance: I wept, I cried aloud, until roused from the torpor of her senses by the voice of her darling child, she pressed me to her bosom, but spoke not, ever and anon relapsing into this state of insensibility. So passed many—I know not how many weary hours—until the entrance of Brigida, our only attendant, a peasant woman from the Abruzzi, who had faithfully served my mother for years, and had nursed me from infancy, roused me from my grief. She told me in plain terms that my mother must be left to repose, or she would be unequal to procure all that was necessary for the burial of the dead, or even to provide the sustenance of another day for the living! Heartstricken at these words, and at my own inability to help or succour her, I rushed in despair from the house. Young and inexperienced as I was, I knew not where to turn; I bent my steps mechanically towards the banks of the Tiber, seeking to avoid every face I knew, lest I should

be betrayed to repeat the dread fact of my father's untimely end. I suppose I must have walked fast. I found myself at the door of our old friend Vitelli. I hesitated whether to go in or not, and lingered some time near the entrance. I reflected that of all the friends my father had, and in his prosperity they were not few, Vitelli was the only one of whom my mother entertained a good opinion. Indeed he had befriended her on more than one occasion; and my father himself esteemed his talent and his friendly disposition so highly, that he had accepted his generous offer to instruct me in drawing without any remuneration until I should be capable of modelling in my father's studio. Vitelli was older than my father, and had seen his whole career. He had taken a fancy to me as a child, and had given me lessons more as a parent than as a master. Though I had never as yet been under the necessity of asking his advice on any but subjects of art, I had full confidence in his good sense and willingness to serve my mother and myself in any point connected with our future reduced condition in life. I entered the archway, and mounted the long, steep, stone staircase that led to his apartment. I knew

that at this hour I should find him there, and I had no desire, in my then depressed state of mind, to encounter the young men whom I might expect to find working in his studio.

As soon as the old man heard my voice upon the threshold, he came out to meet me, and seeing that I was in a state of great emotion, he took me kindly by the hand, and made me sit down with his family.

"I know," he said, "my young friend, the misfortune that has befallen you—the whole city in a few hours will be talking of it as the event of the day, and in a few hours more will talk of something else. I well know the distress and real destitution which will soon press on your poor devoted mother. But something must be done. Come, my boy, with me to the Café Greco, we shall meet there some friends of your family, and we may possibly find some means of rendering you assistance, and of making your affairs a little easier than they are likely to be for the moment." My utterance was nearly choked; I found it impossible to thank the excellent old man for his kindness. Not the least amiable part of his character was the wish to save others pain, as well

as to do them active service. How often since that time have I met with zealously benevolent men, who had not delicacy of mind to spare the feelings of those on whom they were conferring real and weighty benefits. I was above all grateful to him for having avoided making me talk on the melancholy subject which brought me to his door, or of answering questions which would have renewed the scene I had left at home.

But perhaps the greatest consolation, though a silent one, which I derived from my visit to Vitelli, was contained in the deep pity expressed by the bright yet now tearful eyes of the lovely girl who sat by his side.

Carmen, Vitelli's only child, the darling of her father, who loved, or rather idolized her, and naturally thought that everyone must do the same, Carmen and I had been playfellows from our childhood. From her I was sure of sympathy: her kind heart had often felt for me when smarting under my father's harshness; and her visits from time to time had soothed my mother's anxious hours when left to neglect and solitude. Her beauty, singular and striking in character, inherited from a Spanish

mother, had early made an impression upon my youthful heart. All my little pleasures, all my childish confidences, were for her ; whilst the warmth of her generous disposition led her to encourage the trust, which in the ardour of boyish attachment I was ever ready to bestow upon her. But I must not interrupt the course of my narrative. We went then to the Café Greco, the well-known resort of all that Rome contained at that time of eminence in the arts, and where my father had been courted and prized, and might have kept to its best society, had he only been content with it. I shall never forget the feeling with which I entered those rooms. I felt ashamed, dejected, and even as a culprit, having to beg the assistance of men of superior minds, who had known us in better circumstances. Here again the ready kindness of Vitelli saved me from an otherwise inevitable trial of pride and mortification. He made me sit down—silently pointed to me while he took aside the most influential members of the society, and spared me even the hearing of all that must have harrowed my feelings while he recommended my case, as he knew best how to do, to the consideration of my father's friends.

To finish with this sad chapter of my history at once, I obtained, and willingly was it granted, the assistance of the Artists' Club to procure a decent burial for my unhappy father. Many of the first artists attended it; and to the praise of all devoted to the higher walks of genius, I may say that they behaved kindly as well as liberally to the hapless widow and orphan.

I need not tell you I returned home to my mother with an aching heart. Vitelli, at my request, accompanied me; and it was well he did so, for as I left the Café Greco, a sense of utter humiliation at having been reduced to solicit assistance, even from my father's brother-artists, almost overcame me. But the reflection that, however humble was the path I pursued, I was still doing my best to alleviate my mother's distress, and that I was thereby earning God's blessing upon my efforts, sustained me through all difficulties. When we arrived at our lodging, Vitelli paused once more, as doubting whether to enter or not. I persuaded him, however, and after the first burst of emotion was over, my mother, by degrees, was induced to talk upon her melancholy prospects. "To you, my best of friends," she said, "I must own that beyond the

little stock of moveables in this house, we have nothing. You know in general terms that I have little or no prospect of help or kindness from my own country, and you know also that I have but one wish to gratify—to see my Ambrogio properly educated for his profession. Even that must be denied him. We are totally unable to bear the unavoidable expenses of an artist's education." Here my poor mother burst into a fresh agony of tears, and I, who knew it was more on mine than on her own account that she suffered, wept with her. Vitelli sympathized with her as if she were his daughter: his age and experience gave him a right to speak with a certain authority in all his recommendations, and he did so now to her firmly, yet with much kindness of manner. "You know, my dear signora," he said, "the high rank your late husband's talents had secured for him among the professors of his Art. You know also the principle of brotherhood that subsists among the higher class of Artists. You will not be surprised to hear that already, this very morning, moved at the sight of your poor orphan boy (whom I have taken with me to the Café), they at once

subscribed, in accordance with the spirit of their fraternity, a sum which will cover your first, most urgent, and most trying expenses. Nay, signora, let no false pride interfere to prevent your acceptance of this honourable testimony to departed talent, and I may say to the general esteem for your own character. It is done; it must be acquiesced in."

My mother's contending emotions may be conceived. 'Unused to depend on charity, yet above all desirous of my future welfare, towards which she knew her own inability to contribute, she felt the humiliation, and, forced to bow to the trial, she accepted it.

The funeral took place: all was arranged in a modest yet decent manner by the kind superintendence of our friend. I continued my studies with him without interruption, and my mother seemed to regain composure by seeing me industriously and actively employed. Yet care for future subsistence would still imperiously force itself upon her mind: she knew that ere long her resources must totally fail unless some further means were opened to her; and after a long struggle with herself, and yielding to a stern fate which exacted the sacrifice of every

feeling of dormant, long dormant pride, she reluctantly decided upon having recourse to the kindness—oh, how misplaced that word!—of her own family. Still she put off the evil day, supporting herself and me as she best might by needlework and other female occupations, until, as winter approached, and our household expenses, small as they were, unavoidably increased, it became impossible further to delay the step that must ultimately be taken. At this moment, when my mother was on the point of writing a plain, yet broken-hearted appeal to the feelings of her brother,—when she had repeatedly taken up her pen with a resolution bordering on despair, and laid it down again under a weight of hopeless despondency, she was surprised by an unexpected visit from Lord Montacute, an English nobleman then living at Rome, to whose patronage my father had latterly been much indebted. She did not, as may be supposed, receive many visitors in her present circumstances,—the houses of the poor are seldom troubled with them,—but of course a former benefactor could not be denied, especially as he happened also to be one who had given the order for the group so recklessly

destroyed in the lamentable scene I previously described to you.

Lord Montacute on entering the house had turned mechanically towards the studio on the ground floor: this of course was closed, but the slight noise he made, and the delay of a few minutes in mounting the stairs to our sitting-room, gave my mother time to collect herself, and to appear as composed as she could. Our visiter had already some slight acquaintance with my mother, and with true kindness made no apology for calling beyond that of saying that he was anxious to know that she had not suffered in health after all she had undergone, and that he was come to add his testimony to the loss the Arts had sustained in my father's untimely death. It was plain to see that he had not heard all, or that he had good feeling enough to prefer a seeming ignorance to the circumstantial volubility of some of our Italian acquaintances in their visits of condolence.

My mother was somewhat restored to calmness by the kindness of his tone and manner, but dreaded any allusion to the luckless group, for the destruction of which she could not account without a pang

which would have gone to her very soul. Lord Montacute, however, relieved her speedily from this anxiety by saying, "I met your friend Signor Vitelli in the Corso, who informed me that the fine group of Hylas and the Nymphs, which I had ordered from Mr Arnold, had been accidentally damaged beyond all power of remedy. Under any circumstances, such was my opinion of his talents, that I would never have had it finished by any other hand than his; and as fate has decreed that such is not to be the case, I feel bound to pay the full price of the work that I had purchased. I could not leave Rome for England, which I am about to do, without the poor satisfaction of telling you myself of my determination, as a mark of homage to departed talent, and esteem for a lady my countrywoman." Having announced his generous intentions in a voice which betokened at once a resolution not to be refused, and a kind sympathy and regard for my mother as an English lady (to which her sinking circumstances had made her more than ever sensible), Lord Montacute withdrew; not, however, until he had good-naturedly shaken me by the hand as an acquaintance formed

in my father's studio, where he had often noticed me before. He hardly heard, but his good heart must have felt, my mother's gratitude and thankfulness, though, from the excess of her emotions, most imperfectly expressed. Our prayers were sincerely offered to Heaven for that blessing which will not be withheld from him who considereth the poor and needy, who visiteth the fatherless and widow in affliction.

This unexpected succour enabled us to go on for some time without the necessity of taking any immediate step with regard to my mother's family. In my eyes the greatest benefit that we derived from it was that it raised my mother's spirits, which without some such gleam of sunshine would have sunk irrecoverably. I silently resolved that nothing should interfere with my duty to that beloved parent, and accordingly devoted myself to my studies under Vitelli with increasing zeal and assiduity. Early every morning I attended his drawing-class, at which ten or twelve youths besides myself assembled in his sitting-room, small, but yet sufficient for the purpose. This lesson the good old man gave me without any remuneration; not without

exciting some jealousy among my fellow-students, and still more among their parents. During the day there was work at modelling, chiselling, and other practical branches of the art in Vitelli's studio. To this I could only be admitted as an occasional assistant, because all the places, or benches as we called them, were occupied and paid for by the month in favour of regular pupils. I could, however, take the place of any one vacant upon an occasion without paying for it, which at that moment could not be thought of; but these lucky chances were rare, as Vitelli's teaching was much sought after. I had, however, opportunities even in kneading the clay, preparing the "*gesso*," holding the moulds, and other such small services, of observing and learning by the eye much of the necessary routine of a sculptor's labours. I was able to appreciate these advantages by the rudiments of the art which I had heard and seen something of under my poor father's training at home. I was usefully employed, and that kept me happy. Whatever leisure hours I had to myself I usually passed with my mother, practising at the same time what I had learnt in the day by making rough

sketches upon coarse paper (which Vitelli recommended as the surest way of acquiring a bold style), or by torturing sundry bits of clay that I had collected about our premises, into figures, which I dignified with the name of statues. My stock of clay was my chief wealth: it was in fact the remains of my father's last provision of material which he had laid in for the group ordered by Lord Montacute,—and it had, by good luck, been paid for. This saved me a considerable expense, or rather, if I had not found it I must have foregone the advantage altogether. As it was, in a short time I made little figures or statuettes after prints which I saw in the streets, and these works of my spare time I now and then managed to sell at a low price, which was all so much gain to me. The satisfaction that beamed in my poor mother's eyes whenever I was fortunate enough to bring home a trifle of my own earning, was a reward which amply repaid my toil. She meanwhile continued to work, with very small profit, at different sorts of needlework and embroidery, which she excelled in. Her health appeared to me to be unequal to her cares, and to any sort of assiduous work, to say no-

thing of more laborious occupations, which, having been compelled to part with our only domestic, the faithful Brigida, she was now daily obliged to undertake. I watched her narrowly; and one night, after some melancholy conversation upon our present state and prospects, work having gradually fallen off, I observed a trembling in her limbs, a faltering in her voice, which, with a vacancy in her usually quick and attentive eye, struck me as the forerunner of some dire calamity. I dared not whisper to myself what my heart feared. I persuaded and helped her to retire to rest; and as soon as she had consented, I called a female neighbour, whose kindness we had experienced on more than one occasion, to assist her to her bed. This good woman on seeing my mother, shook her head, and perceiving that I was in tears, and that my mother took no apparent notice of what was passing, said softly to me, "Ambrogio, you love your mother; dear boy, run now to Dr Bellotti; his assistant is my *compare*, and will do any thing for me; he will persuade the doctor to come, or else come himself, for he knows something after thirty years' practice as a *semplicista* and in the *spezieria*—run now."

“Why in such haste?”—“Ah, I understand: poor boy, fear nothing. The *compare* will bring doctor and drugs too for me, la Giannina, without a fee; for, Giannina, mind tell him that, that it is for an ‘*accidente*.’”

Off I went with lightning steps, and luckily found both physician and assistant at home. The worthy doctor, on learning who wanted him, came immediately at the call of his assistant’s friend, leaving the man himself to prepare some remedies, for which he promised to send me back. As soon as he entered the sick-room, he motioned to Giannina to be silent—and she was in too much awe of the *compare*’s master to disobey—while he steadily considered the poor invalid’s countenance.

After a pause, which seemed to me to have lasted for hours, Dr Bellotti slowly pronounced his opinion.

“Your mother,” said he, turning to me, “will recover this time, but she is stricken. Her senses and perhaps her speech she may recover; but if that should be the case, lose no time in persuading her to prepare for the worst. The intervals which palsy allows to its victims are seldom long. Fol-

low now some directions I will give you. I will return to-morrow."

The physician then left us, and soon afterwards we were joined by his assistant, to Giannina's great satisfaction. Dr Bellotti came the next day according to his promise, and under his direction, and the care of Giannina and her gossip, my mother slowly recovered her faculties to a degree which surpassed my expectations, and certainly surprised the kind doctor, who had hardly entertained any hope of even this partial recovery from his enfeebled patient. I was careful not to excite her to talk much to me, but when I found that she could fix her mind upon any one subject, I gave her short accounts of my progress under Vitelli, and of the kindness of that good old man, and of every one with whom as yet I had had to deal. Yet they were all poor, even Dr Bellotti, who would not take a fee from us.

There was no necessity for my hastening to fulfil one of his orders, as kindly and considerately as it was seriously given—namely, to prepare my mother for an impending change. Her naturally pious disposition, her life of sorrows, her reflections and repentance for her early disobedience and im-

prudent marriage, had given her a constant bias in her later years to think of death with calm resignation, and to endeavour never to be unprepared for it. Of her own accord, she recurred to the idea of writing to her brother a final appeal, stating the necessities to which she was reduced, and imploring his kind countenance for my future welfare. As she had sufficiently recovered to speak slowly, though indistinctly, she informed me in broken sentences of the determination she had adopted: in fact, there was no other resource remaining to us in this emergency. All I knew of my mother's sad history, which, as you may suppose, was always a painful subject to her to allude to, amounted to this: that she was the only sister of a baronet of ancient lineage in North Wales, who had broken off all connexion with her in consequence of her ill-omened marriage with the cleverest young artist of his day, the handsome and reckless Lewis Arnold, whom she had first become acquainted with during a tour he had been taking through the mountains, and whose talents might have secured her a very different position as his wife (which she became in spite of the determined opposition of her family),

had he.....but I cannot pursue this painful subject.....

As soon as she was able to make the exertion, my poor mother wrote with trembling hand a letter to Sir Evan Caradoc Owen. It contained a short but touching statement of the fact of her husband's sudden death, and of the destitute situation to which both herself and son were consequently reduced. Humbly confessing to the imprudence and disobedience of the past, she submitted to the censure which she foresaw on his part, and trusted that the sufferings both in mind and body (which so soon must bring her to the grave) might be accounted a sufficient punishment for her youthful errors. She related the struggles she had undergone, and concluded by conjuring him, by whatever remains of affection the ties of blood might have preserved in his heart towards her, to assist by his countenance and protection her dear, industrious child, in the pursuit of his profession.

And then, without allowing time for infirmity of purpose, she at once despatched the fatal letter. I call it the fatal letter, because in fact all our hopes, or rather I should say our future course, de-

pended on it, although I was already too much of a man not to feel within myself a resolution to struggle and toil even without hope of any assistance. My mother's spirits were at first evidently improved by this load being taken off her mind, and I did everything in my power to keep up her cheerfulness; but her bodily weakness increased upon her.

My necessary absence during part of the day was a great cause of depression, though I had contrived to earn enough to pay a nurse to sit with her and attend to her wants. The possibility of my doing this was entirely owing to the generosity of Vitelli, who deputed me to teach a class of young boys at a school, which he could not himself at all times conveniently attend, and to which he recommended me with a character beyond my deserts. Fortunately my pupils required nothing beyond the rudiments of drawing, which I was really qualified to teach, and which they learnt perhaps more readily from me than from a master so much their senior.

Time wore on, and no answer to my mother's letter had yet reached us. Her anxiety was beginning to make itself but too visible in her emaciated appearance. I grieved, but grieved in

silence, more for her than for myself; for, young as I was, I did not foresee the difficulties in my path which haunted her daily speculations as to my future life. Nor did I know anything of my uncle and his family, and I was therefore free from all the harrowing thoughts of the manner in which he might have received, or was likely to answer, the communication of our distresses. In the meantime, Vitelli redoubled the marks of his kindness and affection to me. I certainly did my best to acquit myself of the tasks I had to perform, whether for him or merely under his instructions. I found that he preferred me for several sorts of work to others of my age who laboured mechanically, and without the spirit which I invariably tried, perhaps with too much boldness, to infuse into my productions. He said that he always liked originality, that it was the very soul of sculpture, but that as soon as it went beyond nature, it became caricature. Nothing can be more original than nature herself; therefore copying nature is but studying the principles of originality in art, as far as originality is legitimate, at the fountain head. Vitelli praised my diligence in practising the lessons of the day when at home in

my leisure hours, particularly in the making of those little statuettes which were my first efforts in original art. I was careful not to attempt to imitate any of his own figures, as that would not have been just; however inferior my trifling performances must have been. The value of them to me was in the practice; whether sold or broken afterwards, their loss was not great either to the world or to myself.

As I gained ground in my master's confidence, he opened his heart to me upon other subjects besides sculpture. He gave me many useful lessons for my conduct in the world, exemplified by anecdotes of his own career, which always contained a sound moral meaning for my guidance. I gained in this manner some insight into the many difficulties that beset the career of an artist; I learnt the necessity for both study and toil, and still more for patience. I heard tales of scanty means, a rising family, ill-kept promises of employment, and the little dependence to be placed on the patronage of the great. I found that the success ultimately attained, even by superior merit, was often not the effect of that merit itself, however uncontested, but

of some accident skilfully laid hold of, by which the tide of fortune was made to turn, and the position once acquired by chance was then to be maintained by ability. Vitelli in these conversations often gave me some interesting relations of his own life, which had been a chequered and rather an adventurous one. He had been in Spain, that country so fertile in everything romantic and original, that mine for artists in all their different walks of art, and had there met with her who became afterwards his wife. An artist's wife! Who does not feel that she who captivates the heart of him who lives on the development of that principle which gives beauty to the most inanimate materials, and whose life-long studies are bent towards representing the loveliness, the animation of nature in his own soul, that by reflection his skilled hand may impart to marble and bronze the life which nature demands from art—who does not feel that the worthy wife of such a being should be no ordinary woman? Vitelli, usually so calm, became quite eloquent on the influence of love, and of the female mind when of the highest order, upon the student of art. He

almost considered an artist without love to be unworthy of his profession.

By degrees he began to mention that wife, whom he had lost in the midst of youth and beauty, leaving him an only daughter. His Carmen, to whom I have already alluded as the bright and particular star to which pointed all my boyish aspirations, my youthful dreams. She was indeed the one treasure of her father's affection, the joy of his existence. She lived a secluded life, taking charge of his household, and was seldom seen by any one. Many of his friends and companions were not even aware of her existence. Her father was bringing her up with the utmost care, educating her with a view to excel in the line of art which she herself had chosen, that of music. I learnt by degrees (for the old man's confidences were not imparted every day, and I had no right to be inquisitive) that Carmen had been placed for the last five years at the Conservatorio Reale at Milan (it was during occasional absence from her studies thence to visit her father, that I had been allowed—rare privilege—to become thus well known to her), that her talent and great

personal beauty promised every success, and that in two more years she was expected to make a first appearance on the stage of La Scala. This object, Vitelli told me, had been the spur to all his exertions, and the motive for his simple and frugal mode of living: his whole faculties seemed devoted to the welfare of his beloved Carmencina. This feeling, he told me with a smile, was the key to his ready understanding of the character and also of the cares of my poor mother: he saw that her affection for her child was of the same deep cast as his own, and he confessed that on seeing me on the morning of my forlorn visit after my father's wretched death, he had been so struck with her, as well as my own, helpless situation, that he had vowed internally to give us the utmost assistance that he had it in his power to afford. My gratitude to the excellent old man after hearing these recitals may be imagined. As of course I did not scruple to repeat them to my mother, I had the satisfaction of seeing that they excited a pleasure to which her mind had been long a stranger. Alas! she was shortly to need courage and resignation to bear another, the last of her trials.

The long-expected letter from my uncle at length arrived. I felt no impatience, no thought of anxiety on my own account: I trusted that whatever the answer might be (and I own I expected nothing from it), it might at least be the means of putting an end to the wearing suspense in which she had lived for many weeks. The letter was written in a spirit of supercilious pride, which, from all I had heard of the writer, did not surprise me. He condescendingly acceded to her request for pecuniary assistance, proposing to settle on her £200 as an annuity for her life, out of which he thought my education might be well provided for in the manner most suitable to the sphere to which my humble birth consigned me. But neither she nor I were ever to approach him or his family, lest the sight of such successful disobedience should encourage his only daughter to throw herself away after his sister's degrading example.

The full contents of this cruel letter I only learnt long afterwards, my dear mother sparing me then all knowledge of the bitter mortification its whole tenor occasioned her. For my sake, and for my sake only, she drank the cup of humiliation to the

dregs, and accepted the assistance he so harshly offered her, in a letter breathing nothing but thankfulness for his help, and a calm acquiescence in his stern denial of any renewal of their former ties ; together with pious and gentle wishes for the welfare of him and his family. It was thus she bid him farewell.

CHAPTER III.

Lo where she stands, fix'd in a saint-like trance,
One upward hand, as if she needed rest
From rapture, lying softly on her breast!—WORDSWORTH.

Recollect that the great artists of old were not mere painters or mere sculptors, who were nothing but with the pencil or chisel in their hand. They were philosophers, scholars, poets, musicians, noble beings whose eyes were not ever on themselves, but who looked above, before, and after.—MRS JAMESON.

Time passed on. During the two next years following the circumstances I have related to you, I applied myself unremittingly to my studies. Correctness of design was the great point insisted upon by Vitelli at that period of my education, as the foundation of all future eminence in my profession. Not that he would in any way restrict my inquiries, or my observation of the numerous beauties of art in which Rome abounds, but because he continually

repeated to me that it was a sort of audacity to attempt great works (and every group or composition that exceeded a simple figure he called a great work—or worse, a great attempt) until the hand and eye were sufficiently sure of their work to accomplish lesser ones. In the evenings I would at times draw to amuse myself; but my mother was ever anxious lest I should overwork my eyes, which are the very life of an artist. So to please her I read to her, either in English or Italian, such few books as we had or could borrow amongst our few acquaintance. Vitelli recommended me to store my mind with classical and poetical subjects, whether of the antique or the *cinque-cento* schools: he especially dwelt upon the use of studying, even to minuteness, the elegancies of style and beauties of thought in the best poets and orators, so as to give a character and colouring to the mind, which might in future spontaneously assist in forming the taste with which I must, he said, be prepared, if I would execute with grace the ideas I might conceive with genius. I remarked one peculiarity in my worthy and revered master, that throughout his instructions, and even intermixed with his some-

times rigorous criticisms, there pierced through an indirect persuasion that I was some day to arrive at the great and good in the higher walks of art, and that for that cause it was the more urgent that I should emerge from the crowd of students thoroughly imbued with all that can be learnt in the lower. He would never permit me to go with him to the Vatican without a previous preparation of study directed to some few particular objects, or some distinction of style, which I was expressly to examine. "To the common run of visitors," he would say, "the Vatican is a pleasure of a high order: but to the sculptor it is more; it is, or ought to be, at once both the highest pleasure and the deepest lesson. Hundreds of times as I have seen—read, I might say—that, to me, awful gallery of the history of past ages, that living tomb of the mind, the genius of our forefathers (here the Roman spoke with proud air and flashing eye), I never pass its solemn threshold without a feeling of reverence I cannot describe. I would fain know the thoughts, the feelings of those gods and godlike men, whose outward beauties in the cold marble are but the mask of a divine fire within. I would guess the inspira-

tion of those not much less than godlike, whose immortal talent has enabled them to portray to countless ages the ideas of their own or of kindred genius. When I gaze on the Laocoon, the Apollo, the Niobe, I feel at once the spirit of the idea personified of the myth transmitted by the poet, and of the marvellous skill of the sculptor : the rage of Laocoon, the poetry of Ovid, the art of Praxiteles, are all present to me his humblest imitator. I feel as if I could not dwell too long on the glowing words of my revered instructor. But I must proceed with my own story.

My mother recovered her mind, but remained a helpless cripple. Happily I could study much at home ; and living in the most frugal manner, I was able to add now and then some little comfort to her existence. I was intimately convinced that the true disciple of art must be a stern, self-denying character—mild to all about him ; hard, inexorable to himself, and to all those temptations that will beset even the most cautious and persevering.

The line that my master had pointed out to me agreed so well with my own disposition that I never felt inclined to swerve from it. It was necessary,

indeed, to study from lower models occasionally, but everything that I attempted to execute originally was taken either from ancient mythology, or from such pure sources as would admit of the application of form to an abstract idea. If I copied from nature, it was to obtain truth, which I hoped to elevate by resources drunk from study, without the close pedantry of a copyist. The only objection to a close and exclusive adoption of the antique, and particularly the mythological antique school, is the danger of becoming an imitator, or at best a mannerist. To escape this pedantry, we must now and then dive into healthy waters, and take a lesson from Nature herself. But in all we invent, compose, or construct from our own resources, we ought to combine the lofty character of the antique with the truth and expression of nature. To succeed in spiritualizing material beauties, and in elevating terrestrial passions into a nobler sphere, is the great, the sublime task of the poet, the painter, and the sculptor.

During this period Carmen was diligently pursuing her studies at Milan, and rapidly advancing in the knowledge of her art, and in the esteem of

her master and other teachers. Her application to the theory, and admirable taste in the practice, of music, enchanted the enthusiastic maestro, the director of the Conservatorio, inasmuch as it redounded not only to his own credit, and to that of the establishment, but also from the love which he bore to that art which was the study of his life, and to all who excelled in it. It now became necessary to prepare for the *début* of this young and most promising scholar. After long reflection, Feliciani decided on the subject of an opera, which he would compose expressly for her, and which he was determined to spare no pains in bringing out with the utmost brilliancy. Vitelli was duly informed that his daughter's first appearance would take place at the theatre of La Scala, and that it was an event looked forward to with the highest interest by the musical world. On the receipt of this gratifying intelligence, he resolved to go himself to Milan to witness it, and indeed in part superintend the preparations, as far as his own practice in decoration would enable him to do so.

Carmen had constantly written to her father informing him of her progress; and the knowledge

that his presence would give the highest satisfaction to the heart of his daughter, was after all the strongest and dearest inducement for the journey to Milan.

Signor Andrea Feliciani was considered the most gifted composer of the Italian school at the period of which I speak. He had struck out a path of singular originality for himself, and his compositions were equally admired by the disciples of the two very distinct schools of German and Italian music. It was therefore a distinguished honour for so young a *débutante* to be singled out as the heroine (the word is not inappropriate) of a new opera written entirely for herself.

The subject chosen by the maestro was the story, so popular at Milan, of "the *Promessi Sposi*," beautiful in itself, capable of great variety of expression, and of picturesque and artistic decoration, and therefore eminently qualified as a national drama, enriched with all the accessories of so splendid an establishment, to succeed on the theatre of La Scala. But Carmen's distinction was not as gratifying to her fellow-pupils as to her friends. With them she was far from being as great a favourite

as with her master, whose pride and glory she had become. There is always jealousy enough among the persons of all classes attached to a theatre, and an habitual tendency to decry a new comer; but in spite of that unamiable bias, most of those already on the stage have found their level, and are of necessity confined to the limits of their respective powers. Thus, after a little innocuous grumbling, the envy of Carmen's rising talent was restricted to the few whose pretensions led them to aspire to the rank of *prima donna*. It was otherwise, however, with her fellow-students. These, who had all been kept rather at a distance by Carmen's natural reserve and dignity of manner, and who, having entered the music-school before her, imagined themselves fit to be *prime donne* of the first water to-day or to-morrow, were loud in their complaints of the partiality evinced by the maestro. But Carmen's lofty spirit, and her intense desire to gratify her fond father in proving how well she had profited by the liberal education which he had afforded her, bore her up through all difficulties, and enabled her to brave the shafts which envy and malice pointed against her.

During the absence of my master from Rome, I had been left in charge of his pupils ; a trust which I regarded as a strong mark of confidence on his part, as well as a testimony to some degree of merit in myself. It was a trust of some difficulty too ; for not only had I to teach what I already practised myself in common with the others, though in a more advanced stage, but I had also to attempt to give the sort of explanations and elucidation which Vitelli so much excelled in, and for which my experience as yet hardly sufficed. His teaching of his art was indeed a continual series of animating lectures, assisted by practice ; his language, enriched with classical knowledge and illustration, calculated to guide the taste of his pupils, at the same time that he formed their manual skill by his example.

Being younger than some, and only advanced by my own industry beyond others of my age among the students, I had much envy and jealousy to contend with in my superior though temporary position.

My poor mother, meanwhile, was evidently sinking in mind as well as in years. The same care and attention failed to have the same effect on her

tranquillity. She was satisfied with me when present, but was ever complaining of my absence, unavoidably frequent as it was. I was now about to leave her for the first time, and hastened to secure to her the services of our kind friend Giannina. Vitelli had written to me from Milan, to inform me that the night was at length fixed for the *début* of his daughter, and also to invite me to come and pass a week of holidays there in order to witness it. I might lodge with him, and profit in many ways by seeing the treasures and becoming acquainted with the virtuosi of that famous capital.

I was, as might be imagined, transported with joy at the receipt of this most kind and flattering offer. It seemed to mark Vitelli's approbation of me, and contributed to strengthen the dim vision I had so often before my eyes—the vision of my being heartily accepted by the old man as a worthy suitor hereafter for the hand of his darling child.

I had of course to provide a good substitute as teacher in the studio during my absence, and, a far harder task, to break the news of my intended journey to my mother. She, alas! in her weakness, was with difficulty brought to consent to my

departure; accusing me of caring more for Vitelli than for herself; but at last, the thought that it was to be for my benefit prevailed, and I obtained her reluctant permission.

I had not seen Carmen for two long years, but I had heard of the extraordinary progress she had made with a beating heart of sympathy in her success. Rumour of her fame as the most promising *élève* of the celebrated Conservatorio of Milan, had already reached her native city; and many acquainted with her only by name were already interested in her career among her ardent and enthusiastic countrymen. I travelled to Milan in the most frugal manner possible, in order to save a little money for my expenses in that city, which I knew to be far from a cheap residence. I did not wish that Vitelli should be inconvenienced by my sojourn there, and determined, in spite of his kind offer, that he should be at no charge on my account, knowing that his means were far more limited than agreed with the generosity of his heart, and his hospitable manner of life. There was no want of ample food for my thoughts, as I pursued what appeared to my eager mind an ever-lengthening journey.

I had not left my mother without considerable anxiety, and my prospects as to the meeting with Carmen were such as to keep my heart in a continued agitation.

On my arrival at Milan, I inquired for the house of which Vitelli had given me the address, and found it to be within an easy distance of the theatre. I mounted the stairs till I came to the highest floor which had any pretension to be called a piano-nobile, above which were only those loggias which make the houses of Italy at once so cold and so picturesque. As I approached the door, whilst my hand yet rested on the latch, whilst with a heart throbbing with emotion I instinctively paused before drawing near to the beloved presence, at that moment I heard the full tones of her clear pure soprano voice burst upon my ear. I heard them thrown out with a brilliancy of effect that proved what progress she had made since I last heard her. Inspired by the sound, my courage, which had all but deserted me, returned ; I turned the lock, and entered, without warning, the apartment. I shall never forget the scene that met my eyes, or the emotion it caused in me.

CHAPTER IV.

The joys of love, if they should ever last
Without affliction or disquietnesse,
That worldly chaunces doe amongst them cast,
Would be on earth too great a blessednesse,
Liker to heaven than mortall wretchednesse :
Therefore the winged god, to let man weet
That here on earth is no sure happinesse,
A thousand sowres hath tempered with one sweet,
To make it seem more deare and dainty as is meet.

SPENSER.

SEATED at the piano was a little old man, rather shabbily dressed ; his grey hair half concealed by a black velvet skull-cap. He was engaged in alternately accompanying the singers (there were two singers), and ever and anon checking and interrupting the music by critical expostulations and interjections, during which process he took large pinches of snuff, exclaiming from time to time, "*Bella, bel-*

lissima, Carmencina mia !" The shrill treble tones of his voice, as well as his whole appearance and manner, so often described to me, convinced me that I saw before me no less a personage than the celebrated Maestro di Capella to the Viceroy of Lombardy, Andrea Feliciani, recognised throughout Italy as the first composer of his day. He was a singular-looking being, certainly, as he sat there gesticulating to the singers standing on either side of him, at least I thought so then, as I looked at his wizened face, and its sharp acrid expression, enlivened only by the fire of his black eyes, which bespoke genius rather than good temper. He formed a remarkable contrast to the youthful pair beside him, who were intently engaged on the first duet of the opera "*I Promessi Sposi*," which, as I had seen it placarded all over the city, was to come out the evening of the following day. One of these two, linked together temporarily in the bonds of that impassioned and thrilling harmony whose melting tones throbbed at that moment, how deeply, to the inmost recesses of my heart, was a tall, handsome, very handsome young man, with an air of unmistakable nobility about him, who seemed to my in-

stinctively jealous apprehension far from indifferent to the fair creature who stood opposite to him. As I watched the glowing expression of his countenance, and looked upon the group, as yet unrecognised or perceived by any of them, I felt my heart bound with the first pangs of jealousy : I saw that I had a rival.

Must I describe the third member of that group, on whom my eyes, although they had taken in all I have here described, had been riveted with a mixture of feelings I can yet so distinctly and vividly recall at this long distance of years,—must I describe her, as she stood in her youthful loveliness, grown and increased to a perfection that exceeded even my fond anticipations? My heart trembles in my old age,—my hand and pen fail me even now in the description of that divine beauty.

I have said none of the party were aware of my entrance, so intent were they upon the music before them. I advanced softly, but the moment my nearer approach to the piano became audible, they turned round to find out the cause of what was, certainly, to some of them an unwelcome interruption. If the other two deigned not to regard me, I, in re-

turn, gave them no sign of even observing their identity. My heart had no feeling—no sensation—but for the presence of my beloved. I approached, and stood still in silence to gaze upon her. Her small finely-shaped head was thrown back upon her shoulders, the masses of her rich, dark hair were classically bound around it, confined by a single fillet that did but partially restrain its luxuriance. The delicately arched eyebrows were marked in character, and well relieved the lustrous and melting orbs which sparkled beneath them, and which shone with an expression, I have never seen equalled, of genius and power.

I have said she was singing, and had just concluded the first aria (including the duetto) of *Lucia*, upon her ill-fated wedding morn, which she had executed so marvellously as to call forth the raptures of her master; when her eyes turned suddenly upon me, standing entranced beside her, like one spell-bound, under the double influence of love and song.

The moment she recognised her early companion, her childhood's friend, thus suddenly presented to her, to their infinite surprise, she left piano, maes-

tro, tenore, and all, and, without a moment's hesitation, flew into my arms, and embraced me with all the tenderness and unreserved affection of a sister!

My emotions I will not attempt to describe to you. In an instant, Milan seemed changed to Rome—time present to time past—we were again playfellows in early youth. Jealousy, disarmed, fled from my breast. I returned her embrace with a tenderness I was unable entirely to repress, and was happy in the confirmed security of her affection. I was, indeed, supremely happy: my doubts had vanished. I once more clasped to my heart the blooming girl whom I had seen leaving Rome two years before in all the dawning charms and innocence of seventeen; and her welcome, warm-hearted and cordial, as in early days, assured me that her soul was as little changed as her beauty.

Why do I speak of doubts? I should wrong her if I dwelt upon the word. It was my own bashfulness of character, and not any misgiving of Carmen's truth, that had made me tremble as I approached her presence.

At this moment Vitelli—very fortunately for the

explanation of this somewhat singular scene—entered the room, and seizing me heartily by the hand, bid me welcome to Milan and to his house while I should remain in that city. Then turning to the wondering spectators, he shortly made known to them who I was, as well as the intimate relations that had subsisted between us at Rome. Carmen, who by this time had suddenly recollected that she was in the presence of strangers to our affairs, betrayed her consciousness in blushes, which did but heighten her beauty, and appeared little less relieved by her father's arrival than I was myself. As soon as I had time to look around me, I could not avoid perceiving that the handsome young tenor (whose name I now learnt was Don Guido Torricelli) was by no means equally well satisfied, if the supercilious expression of his proud but fine eyes and curling lip be admitted as an index of his feelings. I was in no mood, however, to dwell long upon such matters, and quickly acceded to Vitelli's request that I should accompany him to a neighbouring promenade, where we might converse quietly and at leisure, which he had many reasons for wishing to do as soon as possible. Vitelli, pointing with

a very natural feeling of satisfaction to the placards, with which the walls were covered, announcing the morrow's spectacle, and the name of his daughter as *prima donna*, coupled with that of the first composer of the day in an opera written by him expressly for her *début*, informed me that it was not without some difficulty that the arrangement in question had been made. The petty jealousies of the theatre, ever more bitter when a foreign talent is to be introduced to the public, and ever more virulent in Italy than in any other country, had thrown more obstacles in the way than I had imagined. "We know nothing of these cabals at Rome," said Vitelli: "there our chosen arts are less exciting and more peaceable. This *imbroglio* once over, Carmen will proceed, I trust, uninterruptedly in her now promising career."

I inquired who was that Don Guido Torricelli?

"He is an artist of high talent, of a family whose pride does not allow them to take notice of him since he has devoted himself to music as a profession, but whose poverty does not enable them to entice him from it. He has courageously left his own caste for ours, and following a line which he perfectly

understands, is now acknowledged to be one of the most accomplished vocalists of the day. But he has pride too, personal rather than family pride."

"I need not doubt," I proceeded, "that the singular-looking old man I saw seated at the piano is the famous Feliciani himself, whom you have so often mentioned in your letters to me. He seems to be a character; but whatever may be his singularities, his evident admiration and acknowledgment of your daughter's talent would ever prepossess me in his favour." "He is," returned Vitelli, "a most singular character: full of zeal and devotion to his art, of which he has a perfect command, and at the same time so considerate and encouraging to rising artists, that he is as much beloved for his condescension, as honoured for his eminence in his profession. But he is quite otherwise to those of his own standing, whom he keeps at a distance, and with whom he is for ever at variance on some theatrical dispute or another. His ready distinction of my daughter's talent, and his spontaneous offer to write the opera, which we shall hear to-morrow, exclusively for her first representation at La Scala, have so disposed me to be grateful to

him, that I feel unable to judge him with impartiality. His music I assure you is most beautiful, and he seems to have had a perfect inspiration in adapting it in the present instance as much to Carmen's manner and character, as to her voice, in the melodies he has composed for her, which, as you may suppose, I have had the privilege of hearing at the numerous rehearsals he so strenuously insists upon." Vitelli gave me many further particulars on this subject, and then made some remarks upon the state of the arts at Milan; and we finished our walk with a visit to the Brera, where I listened with pleasure to his observations on the great school of painting, of which it is the chief depository. Leonardo da Vinci was one of his favourite heroes (as he would enthusiastically call them) of design: comprehending in that term, as Leonardo himself embraced in his vast genius, all the imitative arts united with a power of invention and combination second to none that have adorned the annals of Italy. But I must leave this subject for the present, and avoid a longer digression from the course of my narrative.

CHAPTER V.

Lasso a me, quando io son la dove sia
 Quell' angelico, altero, e dolce volto,
 Il freddo sangue intorno al core accolto
 Lascia senza color la faccia mia :
 Poi miranda la sua, mi par sì pia,
 Ch' io prendo ardire, e torna il valor tolto
 Amor ne' raggi de 'begli occhi involto
 Mostra al mio tristo cor la cieca via ;
 E parlandogli alhor, dice, io ti giuro
 Pel santo lume di questi occhi belli
 Del mio stral forza, e del mio regno onore,
 Ch' io sarò sempre teco, e ti assicuro
 Esser vera pietà che mostran quelli :
 Credogli lasso ! e da me fugge il cor.

LORENZO DE MEDICI.

Away, away ! thou speakest to me of things which, in all my endless life, I have found not, and shall not find.

JEAN PAUL RICHTER *on Music*.

It was one hour and a half of night, according to Italian reckoning, when the doors of La Scala were

opened to the eager crowds who were assembled around the entrance of the finest theatre in Europe. For a long time public expectation had not been raised to so high a pitch ; and those who know the enthusiasm of all orders in Italy for the highest walks of music, will be able to conceive the excitement which animated the struggling throng.

A new opera, and that by the first composer of the day, himself a Milanese, and upon a favourite Milanese story ; the *prima donna* too, if not a Milanese, at least a scholar of their own famous academy, known but by name, yet celebrated even as an unknown talent ; beauty, genius, and everything that an Italian fancy delights in picturing to the imagination ; novelty, in short, acting forcibly upon minds already anticipating the highest degree of pleasure, was sufficient to account for the movement among so excitable a population. Though it was already night, the transparent twilight of that delicious climate allowed the curious in some degree to satisfy their eagerness by reading the enormous placards stuck up about the theatre : while some were pressing around the door for an entry, others, less favoured, employed themselves

in reading the announcement with a loud voice and strong Lombard accent, for the benefit of those who were yet further from the doors than themselves.

*" Teatro Imperiale e Reale della Scala. Opera del celeberrimo Maestro Andrea Feliciani, rappresentata per la prima volta da." ...*Here an increasing swell of the tide of human beings carried the reader far from his placard, but fortunately near enough to another to be able to continue his harangue ; and trying to resume the thread of it, he went on :
" Opera seria, I Promessi Sposi. Musica del Maestro Andrea Feliciani, dalla Novella del Sig. Alessandro Manzoni."

Here another shove carried the luckless reader farther off, and the less learned of the throng would have remained in ignorance had not the more fortunate wight who succeeded to his post before the placard, kindly continued to read for public information : *" Lucia Mondella, sostenuta dalla nuova prima donna già scolare del Conservatorio Milanese (di questa capitale), Signorina Carmen Vitelli."*

" Viva la nuova prima donna," was echoed from voice to voice among the crowd, though as yet they knew nothing of her or her talent. The friendly

words—whencesoever they came—fell sweetly on my ear, as I was on the point of entering the theatre. Nothing is so kind or good-natured as a mob in good-humour: at the right moment they are all milk and honey: “*E viva Carmen Vitelli,*” replied another voice, which was quickly repeated with cheers from the populace. I found myself at last in the great theatre of La Scala; I made my way with some difficulty to the side-box where Vitelli, in all the nervous anxiety of an artist and a father, was awaiting the first appearance of the child on whom his every thought was centered. I had not seen him during the whole morning; he had been partly employed in giving the assistance of his taste and advice in some of the arrangements of the scenery and costumes, partly in walking to and fro in irrepressible agitation, and in counting the hours until the time of representation. Even now, after silently pressing me by the hand, he took a hasty leave of me, saying that he had only waited to see me safely arrived in his box before retiring once more behind the scenes, in order to say a last word to Carmen before her entrance upon the stage.

The grandeur of the theatre, and the magnifi-

cence of its decorations, at that period were remarkable ; the viceroy himself took a great interest in everything that reflected splendour on his court, and, having a considerable taste for music, paid particular attention to all that concerned the opera. It may be supposed, therefore, that every grace and adornment that the establishment of La Scala possessed, would be lavished on the forthcoming representation of a work of such high promise.

The viceregal court, with a numerous and brilliant assemblage of the nobility of Lombardy, and even of other parts of Italy, occupied the grand or centre *loggia*, with the other *palchi* or boxes contiguous to it. In other parts of the house were seen, and soon recognised, the various celebrities of Milan, both literary and musical, many from the provinces, whom the fame of Feliciani had drawn on this occasion to the capital ; lastly, all official or diplomatic personages who happened to be in Lombardy, made a point of attending La Scala on that evening. The theatre was filled to overflowing, and, as is the custom in Italy, many remained in the streets to catch the faint sounds of the music in the distance through the open doors, while en-

joying the fresh air of a midsummer night in a southern climate.

But the great scene was within. The orchestra took their places: there was a general but subdued murmur of expectation among the audience. The conductor raised his bâton—a dead silence followed. He looked once round him, lowered his arm, and the first *coup d'archet* introduced to the attentive hearers the overture to "*I Promessi Sposi*." Those who have seen an Italian audience on the representation of some new popular but fine piece of music, prepared both to criticise, if need be, and at the same time to do justice to its merits, with the conscious feeling of knowing what they are about, will judge of the reception likely to be given to the capo d'opera of Maestro Feliciani. Equally intent upon the music and the poetry, following every movement with a sort of jealousy not to be understood in colder natures, the highest connoisseurs of society, and the honest artisans of the city, the one from knowledge, the other from feeling of the beautiful, bestowed an undivided attention upon the progress of the piece. But the overture first of all demands at least a passing word. It opened with

a strain of great tenderness and simplicity, such as naturally brought to the mind ideas of peace, happiness, and love : the quiet contentment of peasant life, in the secluded valleys of Lombardy, varied with snatches, cleverly introduced, of the well-known airs of the contadini of the Val Camonica, and gradually warming in fire and richness into one of those swelling melodies which are sure to carry the feelings of an Italian audience along with them. A pause, and change of style : the music becomes severe, hurried, expressive of rage, cruelty, and evil passions ; varied at times by slow and lugubrious wailings, long moanings and notes of grief, pain, and intensity of human suffering, melting away at last into passages of the deepest pathos. Another change : the music is again chaste, elevated, and solemn, approaching as near as the religious character of the composer would permit, or propriety sanction on an Italian stage, to the music of the church ; bearing no direct resemblance to any known service, but leaving on every mind an unmistakable impression of its intention.

Once more the strain slowly but gracefully descends from its sublime and sacred character,

softening by degrees into somewhat that recalls the sweet sounds of peace and love with which the overture commenced: once more the light-hearted peasant-ballad of Val Camonica is heard in the distance, but all ennobled in expression, and enriched in harmony, as the swelling notes proclaim the holy triumph of innocence and virtue over the ills of a troubled life, as the lovers are finally restored to their happy home. The music of this piece, as touching in some parts as it was brilliant in others, was not stiffly or pedantically divided by abrupt breaks or transitions. Feliciani's taste was too correct, his appreciation of the poetry of his art too true, to allow him to show his skill by trick of any kind. The different characters I have tried to describe were so naturally made to follow one another, with an occasional recurrence to preceding passages sure to strike the ear, that the mind never jarred with the sense, nor could the attention wander from the composition. The execution was perfect, and it was concluded amid deafening plaudits. Such was the overture: a bright and speaking foretaste of the whole musical plan of the opera to which it was an introduction. Never did I hear

such enchanting, such expressive music. I was, and so was every individual in the theatre, well acquainted with the story. Yet it seemed as if fresh life was thrown into every part, and the tale only rendered more intelligible by the magic power of sound alone ; so that every incident could be interpreted, and, as it were, tell its own story through the medium of that almost divine faculty, even without scenery, dialogue, or acting. The curtain drew up, and the first scene called forth universal admiration. It was a view of the narrow part of the Lago di Lecco, where the rapid waves of the Adda rush towards the plain, combining the blue waters of the queen of lakes with the distant summits of the Resegone, the landmark of the district. Nothing could be more true to nature, nor more happily chosen than the point of view, nor more skilfully treated for scenic effect, than this picture. The wooded shores, the busy villages, the quiet hamlets, the convent towers, were grouped, as in reality, in the most picturesque situations ; nor was the frowning tower of the Gothic castle of Don Rodrigo forgotten. The whole was illumined by a Claude-like glow of the setting sun upon the

snowy Alps, while the foreground was rich in all the verdure and foliage which attest the favoured climate of Italy. The view was known to every one, yet every one applauded it. The first scene was the unwelcome interview of Don Abbondio with the two bravi of Don Rodrigo, which was well adapted to introduce the plot of the opera. It was well acted, but chiefly in abrupt recitative on the part of the ruffians, and broken cantabile on that of the affrighted curate. The composer had judiciously abstained from making it long, lest it should irritate the impatience of the audience. In order to avoid the necessity of frequent change of scene, which is objected to by our Italian critics, the housekeeper, La Perpetua, was brought in as seeking her dear master on the road; so as to go through their querulous and comic dialogue on the spot, instead of at the curate's abode. This was admirably acted, without either tameness or caricature. The audience having by this means been put in possession of as much as it was necessary to know of the story, the second scene, which was looked forward to as the moment when the long expected *prima donna* was to appear, opened with a

chorus of village maidens singing the national air so dimly shadowed forth in the overture. Seated in the midst of them, and decked in the highly picturesque costume of the Lombard peasantry, was Lucia, more brilliant in her native beauty than by any ornament of art. Her clear brown complexion was set off by her dark hair carefully arranged with the silver diadem of the Milanese; her large earrings and golden necklace, to which hung suspended a plain cross, the last bridal gift of her mother; her dress of black and red silk, the work of herself and her companions; the scarlet knots of ribbon on her shoulders, the long snowy veil, and finally, the pure white bouquet of jessamine, myrtle, and orange flower culled that morning from her own garden, betokened the bride of Val Camonica. The scene represented one of those spacious loggias attached to even the peasants' houses in Italy, which was hung with graceful festoons of various-coloured flowers and fruits, while the wandering branches of the vine inserted themselves at random under the roof. The distant view through the arches of the loggia was again the lake and the tall summits of the Resegone; white-sailed boats skim-

med the surface of the waters, blue as the heavens above them. The chorus, which was only meant as an appropriate introduction to the scene, was soon ended, when Lucia, I ought to say Carmen, rising from beside her fond and anxious mother, Agnese, came forward, in all the blooming loveliness of her youth and grace, to sing her first aria, "*Lieta come un Uccellino*." The audience, struck with her exquisite beauty, listened in breathless silence to those silver tones, which now for the first time were heard in public; and as they did so, the success of the young artiste was not for a moment doubtful. The air was one perfectly suited to the situation; simple in style but sweet in melody: it was executed with a power and expression which decided at once the public estimation of the taste as well as of the talent of the *prima donna*. The tact of an Italian audience saves the performers the torture of an interruption, but no sooner was the air concluded; than the house resounded with the cries of "*Brava, brava la Carmen! Brava Lucia Mondella!*" Here the entrance of Bettina, the young girl who delivers in a whisper a mysterious message from Renzo to Lucia, was made with great

judgment the occasion for the dispersion of the friends and bridesmaids, who, catching the import, considerately retire, with the words, "*Lo sposo, lo sposo, ecco che viene lo sposo!*" in a confused but harmonious murmur upon their lips.

In the latter part of this scene the dialogue was between Renzo (who enters in a state of trouble, which Feliciani had most skilfully transferred to the accompaniment, while the air continued simple but touching) and Lucia—Agnese standing aloof, busied about many things. Renzo relates his troubles with Don Abbondio, and, with mingled tenderness and disappointment, expresses rather bluntly his mortification at the silence of his beloved on a subject on which she acknowledges to have had her suspicions. Then the air of dignity immediately melting into tenderness with which Lucia in deep grief utters her only reproach, "Oh, Renzo!" her further words being choked by sobs: the pathos of her voice, and her natural but graceful action as she turns from him, not in anger but in sorrow,—all this combined to express a mixture of troubled feelings so true, so completely in unison

with the character, that the redoubled plaudits of the audience shook the walls of La Scala.

“*Bravissima, Carmen Vitelli! quest è una cantatrice, un' attrice propria!*” The hearts of the audience were enlisted in her favour, and their enthusiasm went on increasing to a marvellous degree. The next scene showed the interior of the stronghold of Don Rodrigo. A vaulted chamber—dimly lighted by two Gothic windows high above the floor, whose walls were hung with grim tapestry, varied only by one or two still grimmer portraits of the present worthy possessor, or a statue in armour of Can della Scala, or Castruccio Castracane, tyrants whom he rivalled in character—appeared tenanted by a guard of bravi, among whom the two who had accosted Don Abbondio were conspicuous. They are occupied in relating to their companions their rencontre with the curate, when Don Rodrigo enters, and sternly commanding the others to depart, holds conference with il Griso and l' Orso on his nefarious designs. This continues to unmask the plot; and his well-matched associate, Count Attilio, entering soon after, their discourse, in a style of rude, almost

coarse ribaldry, unfolds the state of the action at that period of the drama. An old servant stands neglected in the corner, but leaves the chamber unperceived in the midst of their discourse, it will be understood, to give warning to the unconscious victims. This was followed by a short scene in front of the capuchin convent of Pescarenico, and near the banks of the Adda. The moon was rising, and gradually illuminating the lofty rocks and distant mountains of the lake, while it every moment cast a stronger light on the towers of the venerable church of San Francesco. The persons are Renzo, Agnese, and Lucia. The first, in bold and impassioned strains, unveils the despair of his heart at leaving his betrothed for Milan, and in so doing relates the whole conversation that had passed with Fra Cristoforo, who could not have been produced on the stage of an Italian theatre. Agnese, by her loud complaints and sudden interruptions, contributes to elucidate the previous events of the story. At last the bell tolls; Renzo is forced to depart by the peasant, who has charge of a bark lying at the bank of the Adda, into which he is obliged almost to drag the unhappy women, but not before Lucia,

lingering to give a last look at the beloved home of her infancy, then shining in all its lustrous beauty under an Italian moon, breaks forth into that inimitable air—

Addio o monti amati,
Casa natia, addio.....

This closed the first act, and I leave you to judge whether my ecstasy at witnessing the triumph of my loved Carmen or that of the audience, enthusiastic in its applause, was the greater. It is needless to give you all the details of that beautiful composition, now so popular ; it is sufficient to say that the second act, opening with the riot, on account of the scarcity of bread in Milan, and the adventures of Renzo in his Osteria, gives opportunity for a great number of persons to take part, and thereby to explain much of the story that cannot be brought upon the stage in action, and to introduce a more lively style of music suited to the scene. This ends by Renzo flying to Bergamo, an episode which is afterwards accounted for, but not represented in the action of the piece. Now follows one of the most striking scenes in the whole drama, and one which I think the cleverest. It represents

the castle of the robber knight whom Manzoni has only chosen to call l'Innominato, and the forcible detention of Lucia. I should tell you that the painter of the scenery for the whole opera, which was entirely new, was a great friend both of Vitelli's (who had known him in Rome) and of Feliciani. He had, for stage scenery, painted pictures of the highest artistical merit ; and no landscape of Salvatore Rosa could surpass his scene of the castle-gate, placed as it were in ambush, between a lofty rock and a mountain torrent, frowning on the unhappy victims whose fate led them thither. The litter of Lucia, conducted by Egidio and Attilio, the two worthy friends of Don Rodrigo, drew up before this gate ; and a passionate *scena* before she is hurried into the castle, and a short dialogue between the two conductors and a pair of bravi who attended them, informs the audience of the circumstances. The monastery of Monza, and its scenes and personages, could not, of course, be brought on the stage in Italy. An exquisite scene follows in the interior of the castle : nothing could equal Carmen's alternate spirit and pathos in the dialogue with the old hag who guards her, and her prayer in which

she vows herself to the Madonna, and in the subsequent interview with Don Abbondio, when, in consequence of the repentance of the Innominato, he comes to convey Lucia away. There are few scenes which give such scope to fine acting, or to impassioned, yet varied singing. A short scene only intervenes—a dialogue between the worthy Sárto and his wife in Monza, before Lucia is conveyed there under special patronage of the Cardinal Borromeo, that true saint and hero of the church. The impossibility of bringing him too on the stage is a great difficulty in the piece,—it requires that so much of what he has done (and his benevolence is an important part of the story) should be told by the mouths of others. But it was very well managed in the libretto. The third and last act begins with the gravest and most melancholy style of music, which precedes the rising of the curtain. As much as can with propriety be exhibited of the misery occasioned by the pestilence, (for the horrors of the plague itself must be kept in the background), is brought before the audience. This, however, is too painful a spectacle to be dwelt on longer than as an introduction to the

court of the lazzeretto, where Renzo shows himself, and where he obtains news of Lucia. All this cannot, of course, follow the heart-rending scenes of the novel exactly ; but the funeral processions, the tolling of bells, the cries of despair, and lamentations of the survivors, with broken bits of funeral chants and solemn church music at intervals, sufficiently express the idea to the audience. There is little here for the voice, save a dirge or hymn for the departed ; but in all this portion of the piece the music was most deeply touching and pathetic.

The scene changes for the last time to the village of Pescarenico, the village of Renzo and Lucia. Now, once more all is sunshine, all is happiness, the lovers have returned to their home, and the Marchese, a more worthy possessor of the castle and lands of Don Rodrigo, gives a wedding-feast in their honour. Lucia arrives with her friend of misfortune, the good Mercantessa, who has taken her from the lazzeretto ; and then the united lovers (Renzo and Lucia), Agnese, the Mercantessa, and last, not least, Don Abbondio, make up a final quintett of the greatest beauty, with which, and its

chorus of rejoicing friends and neighbours (in which the national air of Val Camonica is again introduced), the opera concludes.

Never was there triumph more complete. At this first representation the character and position of Carmen were decided for ever. Unknown yesterday, to-day she was the adored, the honoured favourite of the public. Amid thunders of applause, bouquets, garlands, crowns, offerings of all descriptions were showered upon the stage. The viceroy sent her a magnificent bracelet; but the meed which, beyond all others, went to her heart, was the warm praise and even thanks of Feliciani.

Participating in the joy of this success, I could not restrain my impatience, but, rushing behind the scenes—to which I had been given access—while the audience were vociferously calling again and again for Lucia, la bella,—I found Carmen, pale and exhausted with her emotions yet more than with her exertions, lying in her delighted father's arms. A little recovered, she is led again upon the stage, between Vitelli and Feliciani, followed by Renzo; and deafening are the plaudits

and acclamations accorded to the group by the excited audience. At last, she is permitted to withdraw ; but a band of the young nobles of the court offer, in their enthusiasm, to draw her carriage home. This signal and unusual honour she, however, respectfully declines. You may, however, imagine that I did not fail to escort Carmen and her father, together with Feliciani, who was now in the best possible humour, to their lodging. We were accompanied by a few of the chief persons connected with the theatre, whom it would have been uncivil to refuse, but whom I wished at the antipodes, rather than by the side of my adored Carmen. In the streets we passed groups of people loitering to their houses by the light of a bright summer's moon, and, as is the custom of the Italians, singing aloud airs and passages of the opera by the way, as they happened to have caught them up more or less correctly. Never had anything taken more completely. •

“ When these gentry shall have heard the second representation they will sing my music more correctly, I hope,” said the maestro.

“ It is fortunate, Signorina,” observed Guido

Torricelli, the late envied Renzo of the opera, "that our Milanese ladies do not also sing in the streets, or you would be treated to some rare caricatures of your divine passages."

Carmen made no reply; but Vitelli excused his daughter on the account of extreme fatigue from her recent exertions, which, in fact, hardly left her strength to wish the customary "Felice notte" to those of the party who separated from us on arriving at Vitelli's door. Some few, however, remained, accepting his hospitable invitation to partake of the supper which he offered upon the occasion to Feliciani, the Director of La Scala, and others of his friends, amongst whom I found myself especially numbered.

But was there nothing in all this marvellous success that was not exactly in accordance with my feelings—nothing, in short, that I should have wished otherwise?

Yes. When, at length, I found time for reflection, and had leisure to take a mental survey of all that had passed during the short time I had been in Milan, I could not conceal from myself that there was something—a very little something—

that I could have wished different. I could neither overlook nor mistake the air of sedulous devotion which Signor Guido seemed to make parade of showing to Carmen, whether on the stage or off it. In the former case, it was unavoidable, perhaps : it was, perhaps, unavoidably imprinted in her part that, as Lucia, she must appear to return the love of Renzo without scruple or reserve ; indeed my own simple senses told me so. Yet I could not bear to see it even in her, whom I trusted, and in him, whom I already hated : it was odious indeed.

I could not but be conscious of inferiority to him in some external qualities and accomplishments, in birth (for he was a concealed noble,) and in knowledge of the world : he also would have the advantage of me in constant association with her in professional pursuits. I thought he already assumed a superiority over me, from the consciousness, probably, of these advantages, which nothing, in the circumstances of the case, appeared, in my eyes, to warrant the assumption of on his part.

Vitelli had prepared a simple but hospitable repast at his lodging, to which he had invited, besides his immediate friends, some few of those

persons whose character stood highest of those connected with the opera. None of its fashionable *habitués*, none of the idle nobility, however enthusiastic with regard to his daughter, were asked.

Among the guests was a Professor Scheiner, from Leipsig, an amiable, learned—very learned—man, and a great authority on counterpoint. He had been an early friend and fellow-student with Feliciani, and had come all the way from Germany to witness the *début* of his friend's favourite scholar, and the first representation of the piece on which he had staked his reputation. Scheiner's appearance was thoroughly German, tall, calm, serious, but benevolent in countenance and expression, though rather dry and reserved in manner. His grey hair seemed to give him the privilege of showing an almost paternal regard towards Carmen, whom he complimented in few, but evidently sincere words, upon her success, and her taste and talent, which, he took care to say, fully deserved it. Scheiner's reputation was so well known as a critic, for his science and wonderful harmonic combinations had made him so famous, though he never probably had written any thing that might be called

melodious in his life, that this measured praise of his was valuable, and duly prized by Carmen.

She had exchanged her contadina costume for a cooler dress of simple, white muslin, drawn high up to the throat. With one of the many wreaths—I remember it well—of red and white roses, that had been thrown to her, upon her head, and a large bouquet of the same flowers in her hand, she sat, silent and grave, as if, after so great an exertion, the spirit had need to retire within itself, and to allow the physical powers some repose. But Carmen did not require impassioned action to light up her countenance : even when still and serious as now, she was the impersonation of loveliness. Her sole pleasure seemed to lie in the triumph of her father, and the satisfaction of her master. This had a singular effect on old Feliciani : for he, who had, as I could discern, conceived an enmity to me as the interrupter of yesterday's practice, and as no musician—and therefore, in his eyes, nobody—even he began to treat me with a show of civility, very amusing to Carmen, whom it did not escape. But I saw, or thought I saw, that he favoured the pretensions of Signor Guido to the good graces of his fair pupil.

The supper was truly Italian : iced water, fragrant lemons, half of one being placed by each person at table, the *minestra* of Pasta di Napoli and Parmesan, *polenta*, *maccheroni*, delicious anchovies, Calabrian hams, *botarga*, and other *salami*; a roast kid, a large dish of ortolans and beccafichi, an excellent salad, cool *latticini* and *ricotta*, and other creams from the mountains, a Strachino cheese, olives, and, lastly, such plenty of fruit and ices (with cakes and Tuscan wine as a rarity), as is never seen but in Italy.

Carmen was seated between her father and Feliciani, as was most natural, nor could Guido, whose jealousy I saw was increasing, by any contrivance place himself next to her. It was by instinct, I suppose, for I am sure my feelings were above any little manœuvre for the purpose, that I chose the seat opposite to the object of my admiration, and I was rewarded. I had the pleasure of seeing that Carmen was not sorry for the position I had taken up, and I had ample time to watch her beautiful and varying countenance during a long artistic discussion between Feliciani and Scheiner.

The subject was certainly not a new one ; but

between professors of such eminence every analysis of art must gain by the thorough sifting it undergoes ; and to young amateurs of music, such as I then was, it became instructive as well as amusing, from the learning and eccentricity of the disputants. The theme was, the respective character and excellence of Italian and German music. The argument sprung out of a wish expressed by Scheiner, that Carmen should sing in the Leonora of Beethoven's Fidelio, during her engagement at La Scala. He would, he said, willingly postpone his departure from Milan, only to have an opportunity of hearing her in that part, which he considered the *chef d'œuvre* of German vocal composition. Carmen herself had said that she was acquainted with the music, and admired it greatly ; but having never heard it performed, she was unable to say that she could undertake it.

“ The music is magnificent—superb ! ” cried Feliciani,—“ We all know it, and acknowledge it ; but it is all music of the school, music of the head, perfect in its way, *è un gioiello in modo suo, ma quel modo è troppo freddo per noi altri Milanesi*. We would have music of the heart, speaking as the

voice of Nature, though grounded on the deep principles of art."

Feliciani spoke with great and increasing warmth. Scheiner, on the contrary, preserved his calmness and tranquillity throughout the whole discussion.

"We like also music of the heart," rejoined Scheiner; "but we believe in Germany that the heart is not quite so much on the surface as it appears in Italy. With us the deepest passion is ever the most concentrated; we feel its turbulence beneath a severe harmonic figure; with you it evaporates in an aria." This, as might have been foreseen, elicited from Feliciani a loud exclamation of dissent. He vowed, he protested, it was not possible a professor of Herr Scheiner's reputation could seriously put forward such an opinion.

"*Che!—che!—che!*—What can you mean *mein Herr?*—our airs are light—ethereal—mounting to heaven, if you please; but they do not evaporate. *Corpo di Bacco*, our melodies are not made for the ear alone, to satisfy some poor sing-song taste of the vulgar, who are always gay when they hear a tune! No, they sink into the heart, when sung from the heart, when sung with the whole force of genius

and the fervour of spirit which are the heaven-descended portion of such high musical essences as—as—la Signorina Vitelli—and—Signor Don Guido !”

The old man was well-nigh exhausted by his enthusiasm ; but the sparkling wine, which in truth had partly inspired him, came again to his aid in the potations which followed this sally.

Scheiner remained calm and imperturbable : if he did not gain in brilliancy, he at least succeeded in recovering his ground by the deference and respect he showed for Feliciani’s learning and experience, though in mere matters of taste they might not perhaps agree. “ Leider ! ”

He tried next to win over the ardent Italian to his own admiration of Sebastian Bach, that great master of harmony, who schools our age as he schooled his own : but this would not do.

“ Your Bach,” said Feliciani, “ is a mine,—a storehouse of deep and learned music ; we all know him and respect him.....and put him on the shelf ! For purposes of study, admirable : and if all the world was a church, still better : and if all the world was a church in mourning, or a world in tears,

better and better : but, *viva l'Italia*, we want not that here ; give us the Muses, the Classics, and Nature !”

Fresh libations of Montepulciano, which Feliciani declared was the only wine for kings and poets, and as a musician he considered himself a poet, and would quarrel with any one who doubted it, especially at such moments as the present, followed this new outburst of feeling. Suddenly, turning to Scheiner, he exclaimed, as if doing him an especial favour :—

“ Yes, there is one of your Germans, whom I will allow to be a master of his art,—one whom one can not only admire, but study and enjoy with constantly increasing pleasure—*benche sia Tedesco—e questo è il maraviglioso, mirabilissimo, stupendissimo, Mozart. Viva sempre il mirabilissimo Mozart !*”

“ A truer and wiser musical opinion I have certainly never heard,” replied Scheiner, evidently much gratified by this concession on the part of Feliciani : “ besides those qualities which you have just mentioned, one can never cease admiring the way in which he absolutely accomplished as a jest, difficulties which have puzzled numbers, and have

proved complete impossibilities to hosts of mere tune-writers ; as also the admirable manner in which (in his vocal music) every sentiment, and even word is perfectly represented——”

“ True,” continued Feliciani, earnestly ; “ and to me a particular proof of Mozart’s extraordinary genius is afforded in the consideration, that, while equal to any one of our composers, modern or ancient, in learning and mechanical contrivance, his melodies are such that they never fail to give pleasure and to be retained, after even only once hearing, by (musically speaking) the most uneducated and uncultivated listeners, although so elegant and refined as to captivate the most *blasé* or fastidious ear.”

“ Signor Maestro ! *tausend mal Dank !* Mozart is indeed the prince of song ; he is the most Italian of the Germans,—the most German of the Italians !” And with this *ben trovato*—finally—the two enthusiastic great spirits, for such they certainly both were, shook hands and kissed each other on the cheek, ending by drinking another bumper to the concordat.

There were others present, not unobservant of

the scene,—persons of whom I had hitherto taken little notice. One of them at last started up, and with true Italian vociferation and gesture exclaimed :—

In questo felice giorno
Tutti siamo quà !
Con tanti amiei intor—no
Qua—nta fe-li—ci-tà-a ! ”

The table was instantly in a roar, as the inspired votary of the muses had chosen for his very simple poetry a very simple street air, which to a company whose souls were filled to the brim with the sweetest effusions of the best masters, sounded so extremely ludicrous, that even Scheiner was not proof against the temptation. I remember we all laughed so much that we were not in time to stop the next stanza, which, turning respectfully to Carmen, he repeated as follows :—

“ Son vecchio, son canuto,
Ma sempre mi batte il cor ;
Per le muse ho vissuto,
Ho vissuto pure un po' per l'amor.”

There is no saying where this would have ended, but the hilarity became so general that the effusions of the *improvisatore* did not meet with due encourage-

ment. He wisely, therefore, laying a bouquet before Carmen with the words, "*il suo divotissimo poeta per servirla,*" rose ; and with that *caricato* air that the Italians put on when they are in good humour, took his leave in a grotesque style worthy of any of the academies of Tuscany in her best days.

"No, signor, no ; *non si scappa così !*" was echoed from all the table round ; and the not unwilling bard was recalled for a bumper of Montepulciano, and, of course, an extempore speech with it, which he gave with great humour in the character of a "*Socio dell' Accademia Imperiale e Reale degl' Impossibili, Società rinomatissima benchè sia poco conosciuta fuori di questo onorato circolo.*" He declared that he was the last of all academicians—that the race was extinct—that he wandered through the wide world (never having been out of Lombardy in his life) like the wandering Jew, to "*fare l'impossibile,*" as bound by their statutes to do. Lamenting over the fall of an academy which excelled that of the "*In-fuscati,*" to which Feliciani belonged—of the "*Cruscanti,*" the "*Invisibili, e tutti quanti, che so io ?*" he proclaimed that he would die, as he had lived, an

"*Impossibile*," with his academic emblem in his cap, "*la civetta*" (an owl in a bush), with the motto:—" *In sua saviezza è matta.*"

Loud and long were the cheers that followed this harangue, and the *soirée* was becoming more joyous, when Scheiner proposed the health of the lovely *prima donna*, to which she made no reply, but by a most graceful inclination towards the company.

"It only remains for us now," said Vitelli, who saw that Carmen was tired, and feared lest the banquet should become rather more bacchanalian in its character,—"*It only remains for us now to drink the health of the composer whose masterly work has given to my daughter an opportunity of showing her talent, and at the same time has given us all, as brethren in art, the very highest pleasure and gratification. To Signor Maestro Andrea Feliciani health and long life—fame and honour are already his. Evviva Feliciani!*"

Carmen, then, with the most graceful action I ever saw, took from her father the brimming cup of wine, gently touched it with her lips, and silently presented it to her master, with an expression of regard and reverence not to be described.

Feliciani took it, and, kissing her hand,—“*La riverisca, fanciullina, mia cara,*”—drank, with enthusiasm, the cup that was offered to him by his fairest scholar.

Carmen then rose, and, bowing gracefully to the company, retired, like some goddess, from the scene.

Here an occurrence took place which, even at this long distance of time, I recall with very mingled feelings, although so vividly, that it seems, on looking back, as if it were but yesterday :—Signor Guido and myself rushed simultaneously to the door to hand her out, her father following more slowly, when a rose—a deep red rose—suddenly fell from her bouquet. Guido hastily darted forward to secure the treasure, and had nearly fallen over me in his efforts to obtain it. He succeeded : he gained the envied jewel—for such it was to both of us—and turned a look of triumph and rivalry upon me as he rapturously kissed the ruddy flower, before placing it next his heart. I believe I returned his look with interest. I believe also that I had sufficient command of my temper not to commit myself by words ; but I am not sure that

he did not mutter some. I fancied something like a defiance met my ear. It might have been my feverish blood that prompted my imagination—I know not. But Carmen fixed her eyes upon me, full of anxious, but kind expression, and instantly plucking a snow-white rose from the wreath that decked her brow, presented it to me, with a look that said,—“ *This* is my gift: the other is the gift of hazard.” But what she did say, as she placed the flower in my hand, I shall never erase from my memory:—

“ *Prendi questo piccol fiore, primo trionfo della povera Lucia.*”

As soon as Carmen had gone out, I retired—foreseeing that the remainder of the evening was likely to become a scene of more boisterous mirth than was at all suited to my then state of mind, or to my habits in general. I could not resolve to return to the table to brave or to support the proud looks of Guido, whom I must now consider my rival. I could not, judging from even the small insight two days had given me into his character, suppose that the disappointment, for such it was, that he had just experienced, would render him at

all more pliant in his temper or courteous in his manners towards me. I made up my mind, therefore, to give a hasty adieu to the company, and retreated, in a state of great and varied agitation, to my lodging. Sleep, as you may suppose, was out of the question. I paced up and down my small room, in vain endeavouring to decide upon a course of action which should, in spite of my present humble prospects, place me in a situation in which I might reasonably pretend to the hand of my adored Carmen. It is true, I had the satisfaction of feeling I was beloved at least as a brother: I could not doubt the force of Carmen's affection for her companion—her fellow-student even in some things—but I knew not, even while I gazed with moist eyes upon the spotless rose which she had given me, whether I could reckon upon that as the forerunner of the warmer and stronger passion which burned within me. That early and pure affection, indeed, is often a bar to any deeper feeling; and my case would not have been a solitary one had I found that the love of the sister and that of the wife were not to be taken indifferently one for the other. After much meditation, I

resolved to write at once to my mother, and to lay open my whole heart to her—stating my reasons for desiring what must appear at first sight as the hasty presumption of a youthful attachment, and asking her advice as to my proceeding. I wished to forestall an event which I clearly saw must occur before long, namely, a proposal from Guido to Vitelli for the hand of his daughter. I wished, therefore, (my mother consenting), to declare myself her suitor before any such embarrassing obstacle should be thrown in my path.

As I paced my apartment, chance directed my eyes to a looking-glass that hung against the wall, and I involuntarily paused before it, and looked my own image steadfastly in the face. Heaven knows that vanity had no share in the scrutiny I then made of my features and complexion ; but I could not avoid feeling to my disadvantage the contrast between my personal appearance and the more classical countenance of my rival.

I saw, and acknowledged to myself, that I was plain. I was conscious of no defect either of intellectual character or of manly bearing, nor of any want of the expression that should animate the face

of an independent and honest man. Yet, confessing, as I did without reserve, my own deficiencies, I had too high an opinion of Carmen's mind, as well as too firm a trust in her affections, to believe for a moment that her heart could be swayed by such a paltry consideration as the difference in personal appearance between myself and Guido Torricelli.

CHAPTER VI.

That mind alone whose every thought is rhythm can embody music, can comprehend its mysteries, its divine inspirations, and can alone speak to the senses of its intellectual revelations. Although spirits may feed upon it as we do upon air, yet it may not nourish all mortal men; and those privileged few alone, who have drawn from its heavenly source, may aspire to hold spiritual converse with it. How few are these! for, like the thousands who marry for love, and who profess love, whilst Love will single out but one amongst them, so also will thousands court Music, whilst she turns a deaf ear to all but the chosen few. She too, like her sister arts, is based on morality—that fountain-head of genuine invention.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN.

THE opera of the *Promessi Sposi* enjoyed a full tide of popularity. It was repeated almost nightly to overflowing houses; and it is hard to say whether the beauty of the music, the grace and talent of the *prima donna*, or the general taste of the spectacle, which was calculated to work upon the national feeling and predilections of the Lombard audience

in an eminent degree, had the greatest share in producing its unrivalled success. It is needless to say how deeply I participated in the glories of Carmen, Feliciani, and Vitelli, for they had all contributed to the effect of this marvellous drama ; but I may yet say, that had my heart been less troubled, I should have enjoyed it more. Indeed I did not remain long enough at Milan to see more than the commencement of this triumph, owing to circumstances which I must proceed to relate. While I was impatiently awaiting the letter I expected to receive from my mother, there arrived at Milan an English traveller, a nobleman, whom I well recollected to have seen at Rome, where he had been a patron of my father's in his best days, and a generous friend to my mother in the hour of her most poignant distress. This was Lord Montacute, of whom I have already spoken in the beginning of my story. He kindly renewed his acquaintance with me, and made what I am sure, from his character, were sincere inquiries after my mother's health, and my own progress in the art to which he knew I had been destined from my infancy.

I was pained not to be able to give a satisfactory

reply to what related to my mother ; and with regard to myself, I could not, in modesty, say more than refer him to my master, Vitelli, whom he had previously known at Rome.

Lord Montacute's general good taste, and sound knowledge of subjects connected with art, made him anxious to see as much as possible of the most celebrated professors in every branch, as well as of their works. He judged rightly, that, although the work is not, as some pretend, the mere offspring of the mind that conceives it, yet still that work itself cannot be correctly or fully appreciated, unless taken in conjunction with a certain idea of the thought and intention of the workman. He considered, therefore, that the haughty feeling which leads men of wealth to buy at high prices the *chef d'œuvres* of art, however well chosen, while they keep aloof from the society of those who produced them, and whose talent they tacitly acknowledge by their patronage, was not only a misplaced pride, but also a great mistake on the part of all who had pretensions to taste. A man of rank, of so liberal a character, was sure to be welcome in all societies in which the leading artists of the day bore a part ;

and that sort of society, as I need hardly say, takes a far more distinguished place in Italy than in England. Lord Montacute had no preference for one of the fine arts over the rest. He esteemed music as much as any of them; and it is not wonderful that his first impulse, on arriving at Milan, was to inquire what might be the opera at La Scala. "*Opera stupenda!*" cried the first person he asked, "*sono i nostri Promessi Sposi del famosissimo Cavaliere Manzoni.*"

"I did not know that Manzoni, with all his talent, was a musical composer," replied Lord Montacute, amused at the hearty manner in which the excitable Milanese seemed to assert a common property in the favourite and truly national romance.

"*Perdoni,*" returned the other, "*gli sposi gli ha messi in scena il celebre Maestro Feliciani, pure Milanese lui, che è un gigante per la musica, proprio un gigante, dico; e poi una prima donna oh! è una gigantessa anchè lei per il canto, un gioiello di bellezza e di talento, che si domanda la Signorina Carmen Vitelli; peccato che sia forestiera.*"

Thanking his enthusiastic informer, Lord Mont-

acute took care to be at La Scala in time for the overture, and to remain to the last scene of an opera that, as he has told me himself, enchanted him at the first hearing beyond any music he had ever heard. When the first act was over, he was fortunate enough to find an acquaintance among the many Milanese nobility who were present; and knowing that they frequently had the privilege of being admitted behind the scenes, he requested him, if possible, to procure him an introduction to the lovely and gifted singer. This was easily accomplished, and I well recollect seeing, as I stood between Carmen and her proud and happy father, in a recess on the side-scene of La Scala, the Count Ercole Chiamonti, a well-known *habitué* of the theatre, approach with a stranger of singularly noble aspect, whom he begged leave to present, as his friend, to the Signorina Carmen Vitelli, and to her father,—a preliminary which Carmen always exacted as a necessary condition of all introductions to herself. Never had I seen her in greater beauty; she was resting after her exertions, on a small sofa that had been placed for her in a corner, surrounded by every person most distinguished for

talent and rank in Milan. Lord Montacute was, at the time I speak of, a remarkably handsome man, about thirty years of age, as I conjecture, for I remember that when he first patronized my father's works, he was said to be just out of a long minority. His manners were extremely prepossessing, and his enthusiasm for all matters connected with art rendered his society especially agreeable to our circle as it was then constituted. Fascinating as he was to all who approached him, his amenity of temper never degenerated into familiarity ; while his fair and Saxon countenance beamed with an intellectual expression which threw a charm over all his words, and lighted up his fine blue eyes with the unmistakable fire of genius. I could not, in my then state of mind, view the introduction of a person so distinguished in every way otherwise than as that of a new aspirant for Carmen's affections. Unacquainted as I then was with the honourable and virtuous mind of Lord Montacute, I could not but regard his entrance into our society as an obstacle to my aspirations, and an embarrassment to Carmen.

A short time, however, enabled me to form a

true estimate of his character ; and from a suspected and shunned rival, he became, in spite of the difference of our worldly positions, an esteemed friend as well as patron.

Meanwhile, Carmen's own conduct was admirable. Naturally warm-tempered and excitable, she had nevertheless been schooled to a severe prudence by the example and counsels of her father. Surrounded as she was, nightly, by all that was most brilliant in Milan, whether native or foreign, a new introduction, even of persons of the highest rank, was no uncommon event ; and although Lord Montacute naturally expressed his admiration of her talent, and spoke much and well upon musical and theatrical subjects, Carmen rather led the conversation, as was her custom with foreigners, to other topics connected with their respective countries or their travels. About this time another foreigner, of a very different stamp, joined our circle. He was a very clever German painter, a friend of our philosophic oracle, as we used to call Scheiner, who had induced him to visit Milan by the representations he had made to him of the various talent then collected in that capital. His name was

Melchior Kranitz, a native of Witzenhausen in the Hessian territory, where he would have remained ever unknown, had not Scheiner, in travelling from Berlin to Paris by that little-frequented route, accidentally seen his works, and sought him out. I shall have more to say of this person hereafter. At present I will only mention that he was the principal promoter of a design first originated by Scheiner, namely of persuading Carmen to appear in the character of Leonora, in the opera of *Fidelio*. Kranitz was passionately fond of the music of Beethoven. He was an instance that it is true in art, as in science, that those whose talent—that real talent in which head and hand work together—is eminent in any one branch, are by nature qualified to feel and to understand the others. This gift has a higher source than mere practical proficiency, and accounts for the almost instinctive alliance that we see established between men of genius, whether in poetry, music, sculpture, or painting, or between them collectively, and the eminent in the severer but not less ennobling pursuits of astronomy and physical science. Scheiner and Kranitz seemed to have made it a point of

honour to bring out the talent of Carmen in a German opera ; no matter that it was to be of necessity represented in Italian dress : their nationality was pinned to the music, and to the idea that the greatest triumph, as they augured, of the first young singer of the day should be in an opera of the most celebrated of the modern German composers.

I was quite ignorant of the music of Beethoven, and had but little notion of the German style at all ; but I felt so confident of Carmen's success in any part she undertook, that I resolved to second the idea as far as I could by talking the matter over with Vitelli. His ideas concurred with mine, but the more difficult persons to gain over were the Italians. The Director of the La Scala at first would not hear of it : he said the music of *Fidelio* might be good, and indeed he did not pretend ignorance of it, but that the best music, the best anything, could gain nothing by being known to be German. Scheiner and Melchior fired up at this, and were loud in their assertions that Beethoven stood too high to be misunderstood in any form. Scheiner in particular maintained that it

would be an agreeable novelty to the people of Milan to hear such an opera as *Fidelio*.

The director shook his head, and said, "No, *caro lei*, we do not misunderstand your music—you will find it in our lessons, and with many a professor—but, *nel pubblico Milanese, non vi dirò bugie, nepuno la sprezza—ma nepuno la vuole.*"

I did not conceive that I had a right to speak; but Vitelli interposed, and begged that the decision might be left to Carmen, guided by the advice of Feliciani. This at last was assented to; but the director continued to grumble, and only trusted that the maestro would know better than to palm an opera *Fedesca* upon an Italian audience.

"*E un tesoro per l' arte, questa signorina prima donna, è un tesoro per l' impresario*"—here the truth came out—"è non si buttano via quattrini così," murmured the director between his teeth, as he left us. Carmen readily consented to undertake Leonora, and a harder task to persuade Feliciani to agree to it. He had the prejudices of an Italian, but was too great a musician himself seriously to object to Beethoven. He only doubted whether

Fidelio could be properly got up at Milan. He had no doubt of his pupil's success.

It so happened that a rumour of these discussions reached the ears of the viceroy, whose court, little occupied with graver matters, took especial interest in the affairs of La Scala. The theatre in an Italian city is always a sort of state concern, and holds a much higher place in public estimation than in other countries. No wonder then that an Austrian prince should favour the idea of bringing out a *chef d'œuvre* of German music, and intimate as he did his pleasure that Fidelio should be performed.

This decided the question. Time, of course, was required for the necessary preparations, and the very first rehearsal convinced even the reluctant Impresario of the beauty of the music (*benchè Tedesca*), and of Carmen's perfect ability to execute it. Guido had an inclination to make objections, but fear of offending Carmen, and the discovery that he too might shine in the part of Florestan, overcame his strong Italian prejudices. While all this was in progress, I was awaiting with daily increasing anxiety my mother's answer to my letter. Days passed, and it came not: nights, sleepless

nights, wore away, till my patience nearly sank. During this time *Fidelio* was announced all over Milan, with the addition not only of *Carmen*'s name, but with the significant notice that it was given by order of his imperial highness the viceroy. Contrary to all the expectations of the narrow-minded *Impresario* and his clique, who were thorough Italians in their mistaken national or rather provincial prejudices, the announcement took wonderfully with the Milanese public. "At last," said they, "we shall hear what a good German opera really is ; and if it be well got up and executed by the signorina (the name *Carmen* was now generally known by) in the style in which she performs our own music, it must indeed be worth hearing." On the night of the first representation of the long-expected opera, there was even a greater assemblage of distinguished persons than usual in *La Scala*. The whole viceregal court were there, and numbers of Germans, who did but little frequent the Italian theatre. Scheiner and his little band of connoisseurs occupied a snug side-box belonging to the direction of the theatre, while Feliciani preferred remaining behind the scenes with Vitelli, in order

to be nearer to his favourite pupil. I knew not where to stay ; sometimes with one party, sometimes with the other, I became, from my anxiety, almost beside myself. As the opera progressed, however, I became calmer in mind, and was able to enjoy the intellectual character of the music. What a mighty work is this *Fidelio* ! how the master-mind shows through its every note ! Truly every piece in it may be called a musical painting, in which we see most accurately and wonderfully portrayed all the varied feelings and emotions called forth by the soul-stirring narrative embodied in the whole. Nothing is too simple or too grand, whether the somewhat commonplace courtship of Jacquino and Marcellina, the old gaoler's simple-minded panegyric on the advantages of gold, the delight experienced by the poor prisoners on being allowed for a short space to breathe the pure air of heaven, the violent hate and ruthless cruelty with which the dastardly Pizarro pursues his intended victim, the high-minded resignation (although nearly driven to madness by protracted sufferings) of Florestan, or the persevering energy and sublime devotion of the heroic Leonora. But to enumerate all the gems of

musical expression contained in this great composition is foreign to my purpose, and would require a volume. I believe I am justified in saying that, in the opinion of the highest judges of art, the *Fidelio*, considered as a piece of lovely and highly descriptive music, has never been surpassed.

The success of this opera, and of course that of *Carmen* with it, exceeded even that of her first representation. Her perfect acting of the interesting part of *Leonora*, the chastened beauty of the music, and the daily force and development which her voice and musical talent seemed to acquire by practice, all contributed to stamp this performance as one of the most successful ever known on the boards of *La Scala*. It is difficult to say whether *Feliciani* (he had not a shade of jealousy in his true appreciation and feeling of his art) or *Vitelli*, or even the German party were the most highly gratified by the result of the production of Beethoven's music on an Italian stage. *Scheiner* and *Melchior Kranitz* were triumphant on national as well as other grounds ; *Vitelli* and *Feliciani* for the growing celebrity of the daughter of the one and the pupil of the other ; while the Italian public, taken quite by surprise,

acknowledged freely that there was "*qualche cosa di bello*" even in German music. The repetition of *Fidelio* was announced with thunders of applause ; and crowns, bouquets, and other tokens were showered once more upon the favourite actress. Even the viceroy was heard to say,—

"Our court has not such a star as this even in the *Kärnthner Thor Theater* at Vienna."

I speak not of my own raptures : my heart and soul were so bound up with Carmen's triumphs, that appetite and sleep entirely deserted me at this time. Her personification of the devoted heroic wife, ready to venture life itself in behalf of her husband, possessed me with the idea that she herself would prove equal to any trial for the sake of the man she loved. My enthusiasm was wound up to a pitch of adoration that is more easy to conceive than to describe.

Carmen became the idol of all who had the privilege of approaching her. Guido, whose professional occupation gave him opportunities beyond what were enjoyed by any other of the circle in which she moved, was rarely absent when he could find a pretence for being in her company. Lord

Montacute too, evidently more and more attracted, sought her society with pleasure, and to his attentions she could not be blind, although she might be indifferent.

Worn by the suspense in which I had been so long kept by the non-arrival of an answer from my mother, and jealously alive to every new symptom of admiration or assiduity bestowed upon Carmen by others, I had almost determined to hazard all my hopes upon an immediate proposal, and was preparing to open my heart and soul to Carmen and her excellent father, when a letter from Rome was at last put into my hands.

You will judge with what haste and trepidation I broke the seal of this long-expected communication. It seemed as if the crisis of my fate was in my hands ; for though I could not doubt the affection of my only remaining parent, nor her approval of Carmen as a daughter, I had yet a secret misgiving that so long a delay would never have taken place had there not been some cause for hesitation on her part.

The purport of my mother's letter was to desire my instant return to Rome : nay, more than that,

she begged me to return to her without making any proposal for the present to Carmen, on account of some most important intelligence that she had to communicate to me before I committed myself to any such step as that which I had contemplated. She urged my instant removal from Milan, and my general compliance with her wishes, in so earnest a manner, that I felt myself bound to obey her will in this particular on a principle of filial duty. The solemnity of tone which this letter exhibited inclined me to believe that fresh symptoms of declining health, which, alas ! were but too likely to occur, might have prompted my mother to desire my immediate return : this feeling alone was sufficient to decide me without further hesitation to set out for Rome that very day.

Impressed with such apprehensions, and now ardently wishing to be by my mother's side as quickly as possible, I felt that I was unequal to another interview with Carmen, under the circumstances of silence imposed on me, before leaving Milan. I left only a brief note for Vitelli, informing him that urgent business recalled me to Rome, and promising that I would return to Milan as soon

as ever the affair for which I was obliged to absent myself, would permit. I did not attempt to be more explicit ; indeed I was so ignorant of what I was going to hear, or of my mother's real reasons for recalling me, that any explanation would have seemed but an excuse or a subterfuge.

CHAPTER VII.

The gods approve

The depth and not the tumult of the soul.—WORDSWORTH.

It is always a misfortune to step into new relations to which one has not been inured; we are often against our will lured into a false sympathy; the incompleteness of such positions troubles us, and yet we see no means either of completing them, or of removing them.

GOETHE.

I ARRIVED at Rome. I will not dwell upon the state of my feelings: you may possibly understand them; but I must add, that in addition to the reasons I had both for longing for, and at the same time dreading, the interview impending with my mother, I was almost overcome by the surprise I experienced at the intensity of my own agitation. As soon as I became sensible that I could not by any effort of mind repress the nervous trembling of

my limbs, which, as I rung the bell at the door of our house, increased to a violent degree ; as soon as on Giannina's opening it, I found that in trying to utter the commonest words of inquiry after my mother, and welcome to the good soul herself, I could scarcely articulate a distinct sound ; and that she, while joyfully screaming, as Italian women will scream : "*Ben tornato, Signorino, ben tornato mille volte, ben tornato alla povera Signora Mamma,*" was eyeing, or rather staring at me, as if my manner or countenance betrayed some extraordinary emotion. I felt conscious that my agitation, natural as it was, had arrived at a pitch, which if it did not speedily find relief, would in a few moments more deprive me of all strength either of body or mind. Hardly noticing poor affectionate Giannina, who stood wondering at my silence, I rushed up the narrow staircase, and in another minute found myself in my mother's arms, or rather at her feet. Travel and anxiety together are sufficient to wear out many a stronger frame than mine ; and my journey from Milan, under the circumstances I have described to you, had indeed exhausted me completely. I embraced my mother almost without

looking her in the face; we were both for some time so affected as to be unable to speak. Bathed in tears as I was, it was not for some minutes that I perceived with delight that her health had visibly improved during my absence, and that instead of finding her more sunk in despondency than when I left her, she was comparatively cheerful and free from pain, though unable still to move without crutches.

My mother had advanced to meet me: her look of deep scrutiny, hallowed by its intense affection, rested upon my countenance. I replied to it only by my filial caresses: they soothed if they did not satisfy her anxiety. Little was said at first on either side.

I wanted time to recover my strength: she evidently wanted courage to ask the question that trembled upon her lips. At length her anxiety found utterance in words, and in a scarcely audible whisper she inquired of me, "If I had really made a definitive proposal of marriage, either immediate or in prospect, to Carmen, or to her father? Was I in short committed to a hasty and premature engagement?"

"No, dearest mother," I replied, "whatever my heart may have prompted, and you know full well its long and secret aspirations, I am still free, in all but an unalterable attachment to her, of whom you have approved as my early friend and companion, and of whose virtues you are not ignorant."

"It is then as I hoped, my son," she replied : "I was confident that you would not neglect my strong admonitions, and I recognised at the same time, in your conduct on this occasion, that firm sense of duty and affectionate consideration for myself and for my opinions which has ever distinguished you. Think not that I mistrust or undervalue the character of Carmen Vitelli, whom I have known and watched from her childhood : no, I render justice to her many amiable qualities, and to her undeviating and reverential attachment to her father. I should in truth be most blamable were I, in requiring you to suspend whatever future views you may have towards a settlement in life (which it would be my greatest happiness to see), to throw the slightest shadow of distrust upon a virtuous girl, your preference of whom is rather an honour to you than otherwise. But you will see that I

have reasons for asking your patience, your forbearance I might say." My mother hesitated: there was evidently something behind which she was loth to communicate, and she waited for my answer to her observations.

From the moment of my receiving that letter, in which she enjoined me to abstain from taking any irrevocable step with regard to a union with Carmen, my mind had misgiven me as to the sort of communication that awaited me on my arrival at Rome. Nevertheless, I felt that the moment was come in which, with all filial duty to my mother, it was incumbent on me to state freely my sentiments with respect to her whom I loved. As well as the troubled state of my mind would permit, I answered: "Believe me, dearest mother, that I never for a moment imagined your objection, or rather your hesitation, as to my speedy union with Carmen, arose from any doubt relative to her character or disposition, but I concluded it must be from some family circumstances of which I am ignorant, though I have often heard you allude painfully to their existence. And I am in duty bound to tell you, that I have but the hopes of a

preference in my favour on the part of Carmen,—my situation, as you know, not authorizing me to offer a proposal of marriage for many years. I respect her too much to dare to ask her consent to a long engagement, to which her father might object. Others, however, have not the same scruples,—others, better endowed by fortune, equal, nay superior to me in all outward qualities, may press their suit—and I fear it. Still I hope ; even against hope, I hope. I see that Carmen prefers none of her present admirers.”

My mother, looking earnestly at me, here drew a letter from her desk : “ Listen, my son,” she replied, “ and you shall now hear the reason which has prevented my consenting to the premature avowal of your attachment to Carmen Vitelli.”

Thus saying, she read the letter, or rather extracts from it, to me, from which I gathered the following facts :—My uncle, Sir Caradoc Owen, had again written to his sister, during my absence from Rome, to inform her of the death of his wife, Lady Georgiana, “ whom,” said my mother, “ I have long known to have been the original cause of my estrangement from my brother’s heart. Had it not

been for her proud, unforgiving temper, his generous, though irascible nature would in time have led him to a reconciliation with his only sister, the friend of his childhood, who had indeed given but too much cause for regret to her family."

My mother's voice was here nearly overpowered ; but in a short time she was able to continue her explanation :—

" The obstacle to our return to England being thus removed, it is my earnest desire to avail myself of this kind though tardy offer of a home which my brother's letter opens to us. His wishes are, that we should immediately leave Italy and settle ourselves for the future with him at Plâs Owen. With a kindness I hardly expected, after our long estrangement, and the tone of his former communication, which you may remember was couched in such very different terms, he desires to defray all our expenses in our journey homewards : and telling me that his late wife, relenting on her death-bed, and fearing to appear before her Maker with the sin of having created, and for thirty years kept up, a family enmity between her husband and his own sister, whom he ought to have fostered and

protected, had made it her last request that he should make all the reparation in his power to myself and to my son. 'When God grants time for repentance,' said the dying woman, 'it is not for man to prove implacable.' And," continued my mother, with feeling, "when God, after long troubles, offers us a haven, it is not for us, from taste, or even stronger inclination, to waver in the duty of accepting it."

My mother paused. She had not given the letter into my hands, and had evidently kept back some parts, which in all probability bore some allusion to past events, which it was painful to her to put before me. Possibly, too, my own countenance betrayed some consciousness of the fact, that this piece of good fortune was not precisely the thing I most wished for at that exact moment of time. In proportion to the warmth with which my mother spoke of the pleasure of returning to the scenes of her youth, though that youth had not been free from unhappiness, and of showing to me the beauties of those mountains of North Wales, which, even surrounded as she was by the picturesque scenery of Italy, she still loved to dwell upon,

so did my heart throb with a far different feeling as I foresaw the prospect of my eventual separation from Carmen. My own diffidence, which had led me previously rather to understate the hopes which I had gathered from the open and unvarying affection of her manner, now appeared to me little less than suicidal, and I regretted that I had not had courage in the first instance to represent my confidence in the ultimate success of my pretensions as great as in my heart I really felt it. I wished to spare her, whom I adored, the imputation of having given undue encouragement, and myself that of having been led by a blind vanity to think more highly of myself, and of the favour accorded to my attachment, than I deserved.

“ But mother, dearest mother,” I exclaimed, “ I have hopes, more than hopes, that Carmen will one day be mine. You know her, you have seen her in her dutiful and virtuous youth ; would that you could see her now in its full perfection—its maturity of beauty and grace—respected as much as admired in a most difficult path of life, and combining the filial affection of the child with the graver duties of the woman. Oh, mother!—mother ! ”

I was too much overcome by my feelings to observe the effect my impassioned but unstudied appeal might have upon my mother. She remained silent. I hid my face in my hands, and struggled to conceal my anguish.

When once more I looked up and saw in my mother's usually pale, calm countenance the trace of an unwonted emotion, I feared having said too much.

" Ah, my son," she replied, " you know not all the early pains, doubts, fears, and disappointments, which both the prospect of a return home, and this new notion of your marriage, at once recall to my memory. I, too, have loved, and have suffered. I cannot dwell upon the subject. May God avert from your married life, whenever that shall be, the trials....."

My mother was unable to proceed. I knew too well the cause ; and hastened to change a topic that could not but awaken sad recollections in her mind.

" I did not wish to precipitate an engagement, dear mother," said I, " to which, from the most prudential motives, you might have a temporary

objection ; but it is my duty to that dear girl not to allow our tacit understanding, for such I dare to call it, to be too easily passed over as a mere fleeting passion. Nay, I willingly consent to go to England with you : many are the reasons that would make such a journey desirable to me ; but I cannot desert Carmen."

" You, and she too, my son, must in our poor station of life be prepared for delay, even for long delay, in the accomplishment of the best and most promising matrimonial projects. What must it be, then, in your case, Ambrose ? Dependent we are, and though perhaps on the brink of a happier fortune as to pecuniary means, dependent we must still be, and be content to remain, in many particulars of our situation. Your uncle wishes us not only to come to, but to stay with him. Speak not to me of the freedom, the need of independence to an artist's life, to his thoughts, to his genius, to his very nature : all this I have heard before, though not from you ; all this I have trusted, and, alas ! have seen it miserably fail. Such independence is a mockery—it is a mockery—it is the most precarious of worldly positions. If it frees itself from a

common life-dependence on one hand, it is sure to end in a degraded, hap-hazard dependence on fortune on the other. Believe me, dear Ambrose, there is no independence but that of plain industry and constancy in whatever path lies evidently open before you. Combined with that, the natural dependence of youth upon friends, of yourself upon your country, both which are now for the first time, as it were, by a miracle, offered to you by Providence, is no degradation. Only the impatience of your age, and the earnest and not very wise artistic philosophy—or say rather the inexperienced pride of genius—put forth such deceitful lures. I know the penury, the loss of time, money, temper, nay of character....which awaits the imprudent.... and therefore distressed artist. I do not undervalue that sweet girl; but it is for you and your future happiness I do and ought to think."

"Yes, dearest mother," I replied, "I feel the full force of your arguments, and nothing shall prevent my following your advice; but let it be with this understanding, that my heart and hand be unfettered as to the future."

"Be it so then, my son: let your heart, your

faith, if in honour you think it pledged, remain at your own disposal ; but you tell me there is no engagement : let things remain as they are, then. Let me, meanwhile, have the pleasure of thinking that I introduce you to the country which is yours by blood, if not by birth ; that I am going to show you a true picture of domestic happiness in the English family life, which you will have frequent opportunities of witnessing ; and, above all, reflect that it is one of your duties, as it certainly is mine, to endeavour to comfort my now widowed brother, and his only daughter, left motherless, and in need of the companionship of her nearest relatives. Dear brother, I weep with joy when I think that you will again be to me what you once were, a kind and well-meaning friend : it is doubly my appointed task to aid you, now repenting of our long estrangement, and to confirm the last good intentions of her, now no more, whose late but sincere penitence was moved by Providence to inspire you with the desire to seek after and to provide for your poor sister and her son."

" I shall indeed rejoice to bear my part in any endeavour for my uncle's comfort, and to show my

gratitude to him who has now so kindly befriended us," I replied. " You, dear mother, have waited during long and bitter years for this good fortune ; whilst I, who might well have looked forward to a probationary term of difficulty and toil, am now on the threshold of active life, brought into a position of comparative affluence, not by my own deserts, but by the bounty of that Providence whose goodness I eagerly acknowledge."

I will not prolong the recital of our conversation : it is enough to say that my mother expressed so vividly, and as far as I could then judge—and now certainly know—so truly, the turbulent discomforts of a life of irregular genius (these were her own words) that I yielded to her will, and consented to go to England without making any distinct declaration of attachment to Carmen for the space of one year to come at least. I could believe the domestic life of England was in truth the paradise she loved to paint it, but I could not bring my own ardent mind to agree that an artist's life—with Carmen—might prove so turbulent or capricious, because illumined by some rays of genius ; or that early dreams of love were always doomed to prove illu-

sions, as she now seemed inclined to regard them. However, I submitted. It was impossible for me, but just returned to a mother's embrace, to resist her entreaties, her sobs, her tears. I was all to her, and I knew it. I felt also, though in a less degree, the justice of what she urged as to my new duties to my country, and to my relations.

After all, my mother had not absolutely withheld her consent, though she had but too plainly shown her distaste to a marriage with an actress, however far superior in everything to those who pass under that maligned denomination. I comforted myself as I best could, saying little but what I have related to you, and reflecting with satisfaction that my yielding had probably spared my mother an illness which would have incapacitated her, in her weak state of health, from attempting the journey to England by land or sea. Never was filial devotion better rewarded. My mother appeared to amend and gather strength from that very day.

She readily consented (such was the unbounded confidence she reposed in me) to allow me to pay one more short visit to Milan to take leave of Vitelli and his daughter. She felt, as I did, that after

all his early kindness to me it was but due to him, as well as a gratification to myself, to take leave of them in person, and to acquaint them with the change in our circumstances. With perfect reliance, therefore, upon my word, and upon my firmness in the determination I had taken, however reluctantly, she proposed to take the way of Milan in our journey to England, and to stay there some short time, both to rest herself and to vary the monotony of the route.

This most important part of all my business being finally arranged, I had leisure to attend to other matters. Vitelli had commissioned me to dissolve his classes, and to declare his school of sculpture and design to be at an end. He had in fact imparted to me his intention of devoting himself henceforward to Carmen, and of following her whithersoever her professional engagements might carry her. For the present he was perfectly well and happy at Milan. Whether he would ever again practise his art was doubtful.

Giannina was in despair when she found we were about to leave Rome. She wept, she exclaimed, and gesticulated with all the force of a warm heart and an

Italian temperament, beseeching that she might be allowed to accompany us to *Londra*, of which she had heard such grand and marvellous reports. For many reasons such a scheme was quite incompatible with our plans, or with our mode of travelling; so, after assuring the faithful old soul that the journey would be quite beyond her strength, and the climate of *Londra* unfitted for a Roman constitution, we at last pacified her, but not without the exercise of my mother's generosity. She bestowed upon Giannina half the sum which had been transmitted by my uncle for our use, which was sufficient to make an Italian of her class comfortable for life. It was therefore placed in a banker's hands to furnish her with a moderate annuity for the rest of her days. When she heard that she was to be possessed of a *vitalizio*—to become a *rentiere*—she could hardly understand her change of circumstances. Her gratitude to my mother was boundless as it was unaffected, and we had the heartfelt satisfaction of making at least one person happy before we left the walls of Rome.

“ Adesso Signora vo a cercare il compare, gli dirò tutta la novità—e pregheremo insieme la santissima

Vergine per chè sia sempre la Protettrice della Signora !"

"What a pity," said my mother as we left the house, "that *compari* are not allowed to marry—or *La Giannina* would certainly have found a husband with her little *vitalizio*—*per via di dote !*" And so we proceeded on our journey towards England, by Florence and Milan.

CHAPTER VIII.

There is no one beside thee, and no one above thee ;
Thou standest alone, as the nightingale sings !
Yet my words that would praise thee, are impotent things,
For none can express thee, though all should approve thee !
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can love thee.

Say what can I do for thee ?.....weary thee.....grieve thee ?
Lean on thy shoulder.....new burdens to add ?.....
Weep my tears over thee.....making thee sad ?
Oh, hold me not !—love me not !—let me retrieve thee !—
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can leave thee.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

It is with a strange mixture of feeling that one departs from a place that has been one's home, even when the events that have taken place, and perhaps have unavoidably led to the change, have been not always of the most agreeable description. The nature of man accustoms him to regard with kindness not only familiar persons, but places also ;

and that was particularly my own case in the present instance. I could not leave the well-known hills of Rome, its gardens, its villas, its ruins, its churches, objects with which I had almost made companionship, if I may say so, from my infancy, without deep feelings of regret. The features and local character of Rome and all that surrounds it are so peculiar, and the history of that marvellous city during so many ages, speaks so loudly from every remaining tower of strength, or temple of religion, that one knows, on leaving them, that their like is to be found nowhere on earth. And I, though I knew that I was going to a new and great land, the land of my fathers, in company with my beloved mother, and with the hope of seeing her whose smiles were my greatest earthly happiness within a few days—I, who knew that had I remained in Rome it would have been but the solitude of a desert to me, yet I could not leave its venerable walls without tears.

Having parted from the faithful Giannina, whom we left in a state of affliction—sincere, but not the less distressing to witness—we took the road to Florence, intending to rest for a day in that city,

as a relief to my mother, who could not but be fatigued with a length of journey to which she was totally unaccustomed. Her feelings on leaving Rome were far different from mine. There she had experienced cares to which I was a stranger : her domestic life had been the reverse of happy, and her yearning after the home of her youth had been an unceasing canker at her heart. Other reflections may also have conspired to imbitter the remembrance of her sojourn in that city, the relief from which now made the change of scene both salutary and agreeable to her spirits. Her first arrival in Italy had been by sea ; so that, although she had, of course, heard constant allusions while at Rome to the beauties and rarities of other parts of the Peninsula, everything, in fact, was new to her beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the Campagna. You may imagine, therefore, how grateful the first view of the cultivated valleys of Tuscany appeared to her eyes. The only drawback was the excessive steepness of the hills and the zigzag terrace roads, which were new to her, and of course excited great terror and nervousness for the time being. Even this had its use in dispelling the languor which occasionally overcame her to a

degree which made me very apprehensive of the effect the long and fatiguing journey still before us might have upon her.

Nothing worthy of note happened on what I then felt to be our long and weary way towards Milan, until we passed a small town called Reggio, between Bologna and that city. Our diligence had been full—full of the most uninteresting and commonplace sort of passengers—the whole way from Florence, but at this station there happened to be a vacancy, one of the passengers having left us at Bologna.

I chanced to be looking out as we drove up to the inn-door, and observed a number of persons waiting in expectation of our carriage. Among them was a spruce, well-dressed, middle-aged gentleman, with powdered hair and sparkling black eyes, who seemed to be the most eager of the throng, and evidently in anticipation of a vacant seat in our diligence. His dress was that of an ecclesiastic, and the first words I heard from the innkeeper, after he had taken a look into the carozza, were,—
“*Monsignore, lei può entrare, c'è piazza per una persona.*”

“*Buon viaggio, Signor Abate, a riverderci Signor*

Abate riverendissimo," were repeated on all hands, as this elaborately-appointed personage took his seat, and, in a tone of overstrained politeness, hoped he had not disturbed the signora, nor incommoded any of the gentlemen, his fellow-travellers : he bowed to us all round, so saying, and soon established himself on the footing—at least as he seemed to consider it—of an intimate acquaintance.

"*Amici miei*, you are from Rome—is it not so?—from Rome, the first city of Christendom, of which I, a poor Canonico, am the most humble servant."

We nodded assent : our part was, indeed, generally that of silent listeners as long as the Signor Abate remained with us.

"Well, what is the news, *Signori miei*? Are the new Cardinals published yet? Is the name of my revered friend, the Bishop of Rimini, among them? One name I am sure you will not find there—that of your humble servant to command, the poor Canonico di San Paolo. Ha! ha!"

With a pinch of snuff, after this sally, he looked around him, and apparently not finding us in a sufficiently merry humour, or at least not up to his mark, he changed the subject.

"*Volete sapere la nuove di Milano?*" without waiting for a reply, he continued,—"*Sapete che c'è un' Angiola, ma una Angiola propria del Cielo che vi si trova per appunto.*"

"*E dove?*" asked the astonished fellow-travelers. "*Sulla Scala: canta come lo farebbe l'Angiola Gabriele se fosse venuto a nostro mondo.*" This was not enough for the awakened curiosity of his audience, who insisted upon knowing more of the interesting Angel who seemed to have inspired the Abate with such unusual fire.

"You must know, then, *Signor mio*," said he, addressing himself, I know not why, to me, "that this divine cantatrice has made the greatest sensation in Milan—*cosa strana che non sia neppure Milanese lei*: she represents the finest parts in a manner that was never before heard on any stage. There she is, an angel, they say, of purity and virtue, with her father on one side, her dragon of a composer master on the other—*che lo conosco bene io, quel Signor Maestro Feliciani*: no one can get nearer except the privileged few. Few indeed; but I know who they are."

Some signs of curiosity being here manifested

among the company, the loquacious Abate went on :

“ You will understand well, *Signori miei*, that I, a humble member of the church, cannot be a frequenter of theatres and such places, which lie indirectly under the ban of the greater or the lesser excommunication. But I have certain friends who tell me the news of all societies.....”

He looked significantly, and took a larger proportion of snuff than usual. I could almost have found it in my heart to ask whether his friends were not among the police, as they certainly deserved to be, if some stories, which he afterwards retailed to us, were true.

“ *Ebbene Signori miei illustrissimi*,” he continued, perceiving the impression he had created, which on my side I fear was only too painfully visible : “ to proceed—you must understand that this adorable *prima donna* has turned the heads of all Milan ; not only the empty ones, but the grave and respectable. Her singing, her acting is beyond anything I ever heard.”

“ You have heard her then, Monsignore,” interrupted one of the company.

“ Heard her ! what did I say ?—yes, no, more yes than no, by stealth, you understand, *avete capito, Signori*. One may hear a warbler’s notes by accident I hope, *senza peccato mortale*. But for my story. La Signorina Vitelli, that is her name, sir, sings in two principal operas, in one—*una cosaccia Tedesca, che si dice Fidelio*, to show her strength, her immense talent, her stupendous power of voice, and science of music—*perchè signori, la musica Tedesca è magnifica, stupenda, benchè sia Tedesca* ; and then she captivated every Italian, every Milanese heart in the performance of our national opera—*I Promessi Sposi*. Nothing was ever so perfect, so graceful, so true to nature, in a word so Milanese ! *eppure non è Milanese ; Maraviglio !* ”

My attention, as well as that of my mother, was riveted on all that the communicative Abate imparted to us. I was about to ask some perhaps imprudent questions, when I was saved the trouble by a sudden burst of wonder, not at anything about him or us, but at himself for not having after all told us his promised story.

“ *Sentite, sentite, signori miei, la signorina prima donna* has of course a hundred devoted slaves, from

the son of the Archduke Viceroy downwards. But they are all kept at a distance...except...except two...yes, two!"

I became tremblingly alive to what was passing, but my mother's look of deep but painful attention compelled me to keep silence.

"*E chi sono i due fortunati?*" grumbled a third voice from the depth of the *vettura*, which very opportunely reminded me that there were other attentive listeners in company besides ourselves.

"*Ora lo sentirete, signori.* There is one, a *bellissimo giovane, il signor primo tenore—giovane di talento, di cuore*, eh? it is he that has fought the duel with which all Milan rings, *bravissimo giovane, ha coraggio lei, peccato che sia stato ucciso no...non è stato propriamenti ucciso perchè morto non è*; but you will understand, gentlemen, that he was only just wounded in the side, some say run through the body; but I assure you, sirs, it is not true—*ferito, ma non morto, sono due cose, non è vero Signori?*" Another pinch of snuff, long and deep.

"And who was his antagonist?" I ventured to ask.

"*Le dirò subito, caro Signore. Non era il figlio*

del Vicerè: no. Non era neppure quel gran bel Milordo Inglese che sta sempre vicino alla Signorina, e che tutti dicono che sia il favorito. No! era una brutta faccia d'un pittore Tedesco, e perchè non fu lui ferito, ammazzato, non lo so, ma così è sempre con quei Tedeschi. Debbono morire nostri Italiani, e pri scappano loro."

I hardly knew what to do. I had heard enough to alarm me for Carmen's situation, as I was sure that with such people, and such events passing around her, it would be nearly impossible that she should avoid blame in the eyes of the public. If the Abate was precluded from the opera before the scenes, he certainly seemed to know what passed behind them.

"Well, gentlemen," continued the Abate, "this quarrel sprang out of the most trifling occasion, some dispute as to who should escort the Signorina to her carriage, some bagatelle which I am not able to repeat with certainty; but it matters little as to the motive; jealousy, pure jealousy of one another's pretensions, was the real cause: and now see the effect,—Signor Guido Torricelli is severely wounded in the chest, but not killed, by *quel Tedesco pittore*

Melchior Kranitz, and so you will not have the pleasure of hearing the *primo tenore* of La Scala. More's the pity, his voice was so rich, so luxuriant. They will never find one to supply his place, for Italian operas at least. This of course, as Signorina Vitelli could not listen for a moment to such an *omaccio* as Meinherr Melchior, will leave free opening for the attentions of Milordo Inglese, who is truly a *bel cavalier ricco e generoso*, but who would go bury *la prima di tutte le prime donna del Teatro Italiano*, in his *triste* and damp marshes of North England, where is no sun, no opera ! *Ahi, la povera donna !*"

My impatience to arrive at Milan hourly increased as I listened to the gossiping of our fellow-traveller, which continued unceasingly, though upon topics afterwards less interesting to me, during the remainder of our route. Anxiety to know the real truth in what had happened, since something certainly had happened, made me far more restless and irritable than any thing that the Abate had brought out of his store of theatrical anecdote, of which I have not given you a tenth part. My mother's attention had been more fixed upon the narration than such

stories had any claim to; and I observed with uneasiness, that whenever the name of Carmen was introduced, she looked at me in a manner my conscious heart could not but feel was full of a deep and sad meaning of warning and discouragement. At last, to my great relief, we entered the gates of Milan. While the diligence was waiting for the usual formal examination of passports and luggage at the office within the city gate, our Abate, who was indefatigable, among his other qualities, in showing us, as strangers, every thing he thought remarkable on the road, tapped me on the hand, and pointed out an *affiche* posted on the wall near our carriage-window. I saw at once that it was the announcement of a return to the former opera of the Sposi, to be performed at La Scala that evening, on account of the impossibility of proceeding with Fidelio during the absence, from severe illness, of the *primo tenore*, Signor Guido Torricelli.

That part of the story then was true, whatever exaggeration the Abate might have indulged in as to details.

"So Signor Gherardi is to play Renzo too, *che, che, che bel giovane* (this with great satire). How

I pity La Carmencina, who must like to play a lover's part to a man of noble features like Guido Torricelli, rather than *quel ladroncino Gherardi*. That is natural after all. Now if Meinherr Melchior were but a singer instead of a painter, would it not be a bold stroke for him to play *primo amoroso* to the *bella* of him whom he has laid in peace, or done his best to do so at least."

Just then, happily for me, the carriage moved on, and I felt greatly relieved when at length we were delivered from the *bavardage* of this curious specimen of a worldly churchman. Within five minutes more we were landed at the Posta Imperiale, and I hastened to convey my mother to a quiet *albergo* in the neighbourhood, which I had frequented during my previous stay in Milan, and where I knew she would find the repose and comfortable attendance which she stood greatly in need of.

After seeing her established in her rooms, and restored from the fatigue she had undergone by some refreshment before going to rest, I hastened, as I had previously resolved to do, to La Scala. I was in time but for the second act of the *Promessi*

Sposi, and could only procure a seat in an obscure corner, where I could hear tolerably well ; but, from the immense crowd, could obtain little or no sight of the stage. I was not displeased at being unnoticed, as I was left thereby entirely to my own reflections, agreeably interrupted from time to time by unqualified applause of the opera, both in *Car-men's* scenes and in the others, from all the bystanders. When I heard the first sounds of that silver voice, whose tones were so dear to me, I trembled with a mixture of feelings which I will not attempt to characterize. I strove to catch a sight of her figure between the heads of the admiring throng around me, and I barely succeeded in gaining a glimpse of her for whom alone I was there.

The charm of this renewal of intimacy—for so I may call it, where every word, every intonation of her voice, every action of her graceful figure, was as well known to me as if I had quitted her but yesterday—was such that I gave myself fully up to the thrilling emotion that pervaded my agitated frame : I heeded nobody—nothing around me. Happily I was not recognised by any Milanese

acquaintance of mine, and they were not numerous, so that I had leisure without interruption to study and observe Carmen's every look and gesture. I saw that, though no less beautiful than I had left her, she had evidently a degree of paleness, and a sadness of expression that was new to me, although it heightened the interest of her acting. Her greater familiarity with the theatre gave an ease to her manner on the stage, which set off the pure style of her singing to the greatest advantage. In the more finished passages, where she was under the influence of strong emotion, she was so inimitably true to nature, that I was immediately struck with the idea that she was in reality suffering from the grief, or at least the melancholy, which the giddy crowd, who thought her singing only for their amusement, imagined to be assumed. They ignorantly applauded the acting, which was, in fact, reality. I knew her too well to doubt but that the mournful sweetness of her voice betokened some inward oppression. I watched her through the touching scene with Renzo, where Lucia, sore at heart, and almost sinking under the conflict between a pure love, which has no cause for shame,

and her native modesty, which forbids its disclosure, gently reproaches him, though with deep tenderness, for his suspicions. Earnestly I watched her, and saw that the expressive countenance, in which I could not be mistaken, reflected as it were a truer, deeper meaning, that accorded a yet more earnest feeling to the utterance of her lips. She was, indeed, perfect in this lovely personification, so well adapted to her genius and character in all respects ; but on this particular night it seemed to my excited soul that a peculiar inspiration surrounded her, which disarmed all my doubts, my fears, my cruel despondency ; and in spite of all obstacles, of my humility, my deep sense of my own demerits, whilst gazing on this lovely idol of my affections, drew me irresistibly towards her, and whispered to me, in accents of hope and confidence, that my love and devotion were acknowledged—nay, accepted by her.

The new Renzo, Gherardi, was indeed a *brutta faccia*, a worthy rival in appearance and ugliness to Melchior Kranitz himself. This portion of the Abate's scandalous anecdote was undoubtedly true, and the mere sight of his physiognomy was suffi-

cient to set me against him. He sang well, however, though without that luxuriant freshness of voice which characterized the purer organ of Guido Torricelli; but, indeed, I cared little for the difference, so perceptible in this respect to the cognoscenti around me. I had no ears, no attention for any thing but my Carmen. Lovelier than ever in my eyes, she had an expression of care on her brow, and in the very tone of her voice, which but too well assured me grief had already made entrance into her breast. I panted for an opportunity of judging her more nearly. My mind did not misgive me as to its cause, but it tormented me until I should discover what that cause was. I remembered my solemn pledge given to my mother; I hesitated. I did not satisfactorily clear up a lingering doubt whether I was doing rightly in seeking that opportunity. Yet, again, I had only pledged myself to make no definite declaration of attachment to her this time. Distracted with these thoughts, I resolved to confide in my old and attached friend, her father—to him who, in addition to his great affection for his daughter, had such experience and knowledge of the world as would ensure his listening to

me patiently, as well as counselling me, I might almost say, parentally. Without his sanction, I could in no case aspire to the hand of his daughter. I was precluded by my promise from doing so now; but what opportunity could be better for asking his calm and dispassionate advice? There remained but little time for my decision: the opera was nearly concluded, and it was only by hurrying to the green-room, to which I had retained my power of admittance, that I could hope to gain a sight of Carmen.

With my heart lightened by this resolution, I anticipated the dropping of the curtain, and having, with difficulty, extricated myself from the throng of eager spectators, who were anxious not to lose a note of Lucia's final aria, I waited but to hear her last cadence, and, while I was nearly deafened by the rapturous applause which followed it, made my way behind the scenes to the green-room.

As I entered from the passage-door, Carmen, who had just left the stage, was coming in from the other side, evidently in a state of the greatest exhaustion and fatigue from her exertions. The plaudits, which always followed her exit, were still

ringing in my ears, when I saw a rush of the principal *habitués* of the green-room towards the heroine of the evening, each seemingly more desirous than the other to offer his homage to her success. Among them I at once discerned Lord Montacute, Melchior, the German, and Barberini, an Italian painter. I confess that the sight of none of these persons was agreeable to me in the mood in which I then was. But there was Scheiner, the philosopher, for whom I had some esteem,—there was Feliciani, as usual triumphing for his pupil as well as for himself,—above all, there was Vitelli, whom I most wished to see. Standing, as he did, near the stage-door, which was the post he always chose, in order to be the first to receive his daughter after the performance, his back was turned towards me, and I knew his attention would be at that moment too completely absorbed to allow of his noticing any one. I advanced, therefore, gently behind him, without seeking to attract his recognition, when Carmen, who seemed more than usually fatigued, entered just at that moment, pale, deadly pale, and quite exhausted. She took the arm of her father, who was turning to lead her to

a seat in a quieter part of the room, when, as she turned away as if to avoid the congratulations of the *empresé* throng around her, her eyes suddenly encountered mine, and she perceived me standing aloof from the others, opposite to her, though at some distance.

My presence, at that moment so unexpected, struck her in her then exhausted condition in a manner difficult to account for, and uttering a faint cry, she fell suddenly senseless into her father's arms. The confusion that ensued was extreme. Every one eager to help her, no one regarded me, or suspected the poor sculptor of being the cause.

Carmen was immediately conveyed to her carriage, accompanied by a crowd of some real but more pretended friends, who wished to give themselves the air of very particular anxiety about the favourite of the public: at least so I thought then, as, in a state of great mental disturbance, mingled with an irritation unjustifiable certainly, yet not altogether unnatural under the circumstances, I followed in the wake of these officious inquirers. I was too much confounded, as well as distressed, to be capable of rendering the assistance which I,

beyond all others, was desirous of affording. To my unutterable disgust, I saw the noisy Melchior foremost to proffer his unacceptable services. I gazed at him with an attention I had never before bestowed; and as I did so, and noted his dwarfish stature, his coarse features, ugly though not stupid countenance, thick bull-head, sharp grey eyes surmounted by shaggy eyebrows, and hair more the colour of dirty straw than anything else I can compare it to, I felt this could be no favoured rival at least, whatever might be the nature of his pretensions to the favour of the lovely *prima donna*; but when again I observed the sharp expression of those fiery eyes resting on me, with a scowl which almost seemed of triumph (he had instantly recognised me among the bystanders) and remarked his whole forward manner and appearance, (for his manner, always forward, was now more presuming than ever, and seemed to infer that he, of all men, had a right to tender aid and assistance to Carmen),—when I noted all this, and coupled it with the celebrity he had gained by his late duel with Guido, in which her name had, by public report, been mixed up—it was more than I could endure,

and I shrank from his proffered grasp of recognition with a feeling of loathing I was at no pains to dissimulate.

As I followed in the crowd, the most deeply interested of all the party, yet most glad to be unrecognised and unnoticed, my heart throbbed and heaved with these contending, perhaps unreasonable emotions, with a force and violence I was totally unable to resist. I had no one to accuse,—and Carmen I could not suspect,—yet I felt the gnawing pangs of jealousy, to which my soul had hitherto been a stranger. Stopping at the door of Vitelli's house, with many others, I did not offer to enter it. I waited a few minutes in the street, when Vitelli, who had seen his daughter safely carried to her chamber upstairs, returned to thank his friends for their sympathy, and to assure us that the physician, who had been hastily summoned, had declared that Carmen's illness proceeded simply from exhaustion, and that rest and quiet would in time restore her to her usual strength. I had then, though for a moment only, the opportunity of exchanging a cordial pressure of the hand with Vitelli—a silent intercourse of feeling which

served more than words to restore my mind to its equanimity.

It was a fine calm moonlight night ; and as the crowd dispersed, I was better enabled to see who was near me than I had been up to that moment. At a little distance I perceived Lord Montacute, who recognised me immediately, and with great, but to me ill-timed civility, proposed walking home with me. I could not, of course, refuse ; but I found it beyond all measure irksome to keep up a conversation with one whom, though I knew to be my friend, I could not help looking upon as my perhaps involuntary rival. Nevertheless, such is the power of good manners, prompted by a kind and gentlemanlike disposition, that he forced me into better humour in spite of myself ; and, passing his arm within mine, he led me unresistingly to the hotel where, it appeared, we were both lodged.

When about to separate at the door, Lord Montacute invited me into his apartment to take supper with him,—a proposal to which I reluctantly consented, but which I really knew not how to decline. Our conversation fell naturally, I may almost say unavoidably, upon what was upper-

most in both our thoughts—the late occurrence which had been the cause of so much annoyance to Carmen and her father.

Lord Montacute, with great tact, and, as I afterwards conceived, with a purpose, induced me to listen to his account of the duel, and of the circumstances which led to it—proceeding from a fierce rivalry between the two contending parties in their several pretensions to the favour of Signorina Vitelli, which the trifling circumstances already alluded to by the gossiping Abate, had caused to break forth, and which had led finally to this certainly disastrous result. He described to me the uncomfortable life that Carmen had led during the last few weeks. Her father and Feliciani, intent upon her professional success, were blind to all that went on around her; and, had it not been for Carmen's own strict sense of what was due to her, and her good natural understanding, matters might have become far more unpleasant than they were. She had been worn by the overwhelming pretensions of Guido, whose vanity led him to believe himself irresistible, though she had never given him the slightest encouragement. This

was readily perceived by Melchior, who thereupon thought himself justified in coming forward and tendering his homage in the noisy manner of his countrymen. Every day he had some ode or *Lieb-gesang* to utter before her, in tones and style more suited to a drinking bout of ancient Germans (whom, as a painter, he prided himself in representing in costume, language, &c.), than to a girl of remarkable feminine delicacy, though fully endowed with the fire and spirit of her Spanish and Italian blood.

His best offering was certainly the collection of drawings he had made of Carmen in all her different attires, as she appeared on the stage. These were executed with the skill that he really possessed as an artist, and were the more valuable as representing her in the very attitude and expression of the different scenes in which she was most perfect. Carmen, however, was resolute in not accepting them. The delicacy of his attachment may be conceived from his—

“Keeping them for himself, of course, as if by her permission?” said I.

“No,” returned Lord Montacute.

"Showing them to his friends, perhaps?"

"Yes; and not only that."

"What more?"

"Offering them to me for sale," replied Lord Montacute.

"And you purchased them, of course, my lord?"

"They were too beautiful to let slip, to pass into or to remain in unworthy hands. I bought them, and presented them to Vitelli. I would not have kept them without Carmen's permission,—you may imagine reasons for my not liking to make the request after her refusal of them from the designer,—and, by giving them to her father, I pleased her—and him, and—myself."

This was uttered with such simplicity and good feeling, that I could with difficulty refrain from expressing my admiration of Lord Montacute's delicacy in the transaction.

But my heart was put to a painful trial by the admission of this noble and high-minded man, that his admiration for the talent, the beauty, and the character of Carmen was fixed—nay, was daily increasing. He avowed that it was that irresistible charm that kept him chained to Milan, and that as

long as he had reason conscientiously to believe that she was indifferent to him in regard to any feeling beyond what he trusted might be due to his own character, and the esteem which he might obtain of her as of others in society, he was content to remain in that city. But, he added, with a *naïveté* that surprised me as coming from him to myself,—“had I an idea that she returned my sentiments, I should feel it my duty to leave Milan without delay.”

As I not unnaturally expressed my astonishment at a notion so opposed to everything that was within the circle of my then limited experience, Lord Montacute resumed, saying,—

“You wonder at me, perhaps; but, until you know more of England,—which, from what I understand, you are likely soon to do, in visiting your mother’s family, who are not entirely unknown to me,—I cannot feel surprised at the feeling you express on this subject.”

I acknowledged his words surprised me in some degree; but, when I sought to turn the conversation by saying how much I envied him the privilege of staying longer, nay, as long as he chose, in

Italy—(somehow I could not utter the word Milan),—while I was obliged to seek another climate and a new home,—Lord Montacute instantly renewed it, saying, half-hesitatingly,—“ I, too, am not free : I may appear so to you ; but, trust me, every one, in every station in life, is bound by either persons or circumstances. I cannot, in all things, please my own tastes. I believe I have not more pride than others in my situation.”

He hesitated again, which was so unusual with him, that it fixed my attention upon his words. Resuming, with a little effort, he went on,—

“ But I have connexions : pride is, perhaps, a national failing in England : I have a mother—”

He paused. I now understood the case perfectly. I, too, had a mother ; and I began to understand English pride of birth. Ignorant as I then was of all English prejudices, whether founded on high notions of aristocracy, or arising from certain reserved and exclusive habits, which are supposed to be peculiar to us, I could only assent in silence to what, as yet, I did not clearly comprehend.

Lord Montacute pursued the subject. "Signor Guido is unsuited to the Signorina Vitelli, Meinherr Melchior is totally unworthy of her. I consider her so superior a person to all those with whom she is now compelled to associate, that I feel as if I were doing her the greatest and at the same time the only service in my power by remaining near her, in order to keep the persecutor Melchior at a distance. I have no selfish views in it (that indeed he had not, as I now felt able to testify); but neither Melchior nor Guido could make her happy. The levity of the one, the rugged nature of the other, are equally repulsive to her delicate but at the same time steady character. No; that lot is reserved for some happier man, more suited to her, more deserving of her."

He looked at me as he spoke: my heart throbbed within me. I could not of course take the allusion openly to myself; his delicacy prevented his saying more on this point at least. After a pause of some minutes he continued:—

"I felt so sincerely for the pain all this gossip had brought on a young lady of her strong and sensitive feelings, that I presumed upon the inti-

macy I had contracted with her father, and determined, with his consent, to remain at Milan ; and I trust that my friendship—I have never pretended to offer more—has been found a comfort to both the one and the other.”

I was so much struck by the generous sentiments of this English nobleman, whom all the world (of Milan) imagined to be intent on little beyond the gratification of his tastes and pleasures, and so greatly surprised at his candid manner of avowing them to me, who had no claim on his confidence, that I at once made a full confession of my own passion for Carmen. I opened my heart to him, spoke of our early childish affection at Rome, and gave him in short a history of my love—ending with my resolution, which I described to him as fixed, of speaking to Vitelli on the subject without further delay. Lord Montacute highly approved of this plan, and assured me that whatever influence circumstances might lead him to exert, should be in my favour ; but unless spoken to on the subject he could not of course interfere. It is a very trite reflection, that frequently when human counsels seem to have arranged every step towards

ensuring the success of man's wishes, Fortune interferes to overturn the whole of his preconceived schemes for their accomplishment. But my ill fate appeared to me far beyond the ordinary turn of human disappointment, when next day I heard, upon inquiry, that Carmen, far from recovering from her illness of the preceding evening, as had been so confidently and prematurely announced, had become worse before morning, and was now evidently attacked by a bad form of nervous fever, from which her recovery would be slow, if not doubtful.

You may judge of my despair at learning this agonizing intelligence. My mind, harassed by the anxiety which the sudden illness and suffering of her I loved occasioned, was still further tormented by the impossibility of speaking freely to Vitelli, in pursuance of the resolution I had taken. Here was indeed the overthrow of my darling hopes. No interval allowed by inexorable destiny for even the trial of my eloquence, no use in my exerting it, could I have permitted myself to address him on the subject in the present condition of his beloved child; but I could not even gain admittance to his

presence, as he never for a moment quitted her sick-chamber, and Feliciani was equally unsuccessful in his well-meant attempts to withdraw him even for the shortest interval from his unremitting attendance upon his treasure.

My mother willingly consented to defer our departure until Carmen, to whom she was really attached, should be pronounced out of danger. I was left therefore to the sad satisfaction of getting daily the earliest and the latest intelligence of her progress from that sorrowing household. I could occupy myself with no steady pursuit ; I spent days and nights in slowly pacing up and down the Piazza del Duomo, near which Vitelli's house, the house that held all that was most dear to me, was situated. I wandered alone, carefully avoiding the contact of all known or unknown to me, and offering up silent prayers for the health of her whom my soul loved.

Often did I gaze on the marble pinnacles of that glorious temple of Christian worship as they stood out in their snowy purity beneath the silver moon-beam : often did my eyes mount from the works of man to the more glorious works of God in the

bright firmament above me. Then did my thoughts fly to that pure being, to her, whose restoration to health was the object of my devotions, and return home to my sleepless pillow in a state of greater calmness and resignation. My spirit indeed was soothed by the hallowed influence of religious trust, but yet at intervals I sank almost into despondency.

Time wore on : Carmen was at last considered to be convalescent, but was not allowed to see any one but her father. My mother had become evidently impatient for our departure. Unable to find a further reason for postponing it, I was forced to tear myself from Milan, without having been able to open my heart to Vitelli, without having once seen my beloved one, and with only the promise of a letter from Lord Montacute at a future day, to give me the intelligence for which I most thirsted—of her more perfect recovery.

CHAPTER IX.

God the first garden made,
And the first city, Cain.

COWLEY.

And her face is lily clear,
Lily shaped, and drooped in duty
To the law of its own beauty.

Oval cheeks encoloured faintly,
Which a trail of golden hair
Keeps from falling off to air.

Face and figure of a child,—
Though too calm, you think, and tender,
For the childhood you would lend her.

Quiet talk she liketh best,
In a bower of gentle looks,
Watering flowers or reading books.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

OUR journey to England was slow, but to me at least it was not tedious ; the novelty of travelling, and the many objects of interest succeeding each

other in endless variety between Milan and London, were sufficient to keep my attention alive, and to have in a less degree the same effect upon my mother. To me, the predominant feeling was that of wonder—surprise—at seeing so many things of which I had previously no conception : every thing was new and required explanation. To her, although the sensation of travelling again was almost a novelty, yet the gradual change from an Italian climate and nature, from a southern world to that of the north, gave rise to many painful recollections. She was glad to return to the land of her youth ; fortune seemed now for the first time to smile upon her ; yet the remembrance of times gone by—not happy times—would force itself upon her memory. My drawback was of a different nature : the anxiety I felt respecting the health of Carmen imbibited my solitary reflections. My mother did not willingly speak upon the subject, and it required all the elasticity of youth, as well as the daily changing scenery of our route, to raise my drooping spirits. I longed for England, chiefly in order to receive Lord Montacute's promised letter. As we drew nearer to the land which, as my mother now ever

impressed upon me, was to be my home (though I could not quite enter into the idea), I felt my heart sink within me at the thought of the long distance that separated me from the land of my earliest recollections, the land of my childhood, and of my boyish love. I felt the air grow colder, the daylight less brilliant, the earth less beautiful and less bountiful. It seemed to me, in traversing these great plains or low hills, that Nature herself grew tamer and more feeble than in my loved Italy. The grey sky, the sluggish waters, the want of bold outline to the landscape, were all deadening to the spirit of one like me, bred up to look at every thing with an artist's eye, and who sought in vain for some picturesque form, some poetical idea, to harmonize with the feelings of his heart. Where all beauty was wanting, I felt as if estranged from the object of my love. When at last we arrived at the seashore, and I beheld the long, muddy flats of Calais, and contrasted them with the sharp broken points and promontories that encase our own blue Mediterranean, my disappointment was extreme. My mother told me to look out for Dover with its rocks and castle, which I could not see; and when

once we were on board our packet, I resigned myself to fate, and not even novelty could render that fate agreeable.

My impressions upon first sight of the smoky capital were in one respect only an improvement on those I had previously experienced ; namely, in the sensation of being once more really upon dry land. I longed to proceed ; I burnt with impatience to see the country and the home of which my mother had given me such glowing descriptions ; but I saw that I must not hurry her, since she was evidently much worn by the long and fatiguing journey she had accomplished.

She was, moreover, becoming a little nervous at the thought of meeting her brother, and of resuming her place in the family from whose presence, and, indeed, from whose heart she had been so long divided. I could not but respect her feelings, natural as they were, though I could not fully enter into them : the present occupied me, the past was unknown, and the future had at least the chances of greater happiness than I had yet experienced in its favour. Not to trouble you with all the various doubts and hesitations which con-

tinually harassed my mind, I will pass on at once to our long-anticipated arrival at the manor-house of my uncle.

Plas Owen is situated in an inland district of North Wales, among those mountains which extend from Snowdon eastward. My expectations had been raised to a high pitch by all that I had heard of the place ; but I confess that my greatest joy consisted in once more seeing mountains, and rocks, and gushing streams, which recalled, even in a distant degree, the scenery of our beloved Apennines : that which gave me the most pleasure was to perceive in the features of the country a degree of picturesque character which might make it worthy of being an artist's home. Then a sudden thought flashed across my mind as, slowly ascending the mountain, I listened with calm delight to the thundering cataracts of the Ogwen : then I thought I understood my father's artist-like fondness for this romantic scenery—his excited brain—his rash marriage ;—but I stopped, and peremptorily forbade my wandering imagination to dwell upon the painful picture.

My uncle's reception of us was most warm and

cordial, yet marked with the peculiarities of his character. His daughter, my cousin Lilith, gave us, too, the most affectionate of welcomes, despite of a timidity which I easily perceived was natural to her disposition, and not unnatural to her years. She was then, as I guessed, about seventeen ; but her manner was girlish in the extreme for her age, and her whole appearance was marked by a delicacy and fragility, painful, though interesting, to contemplate. This, my first impression of the shyness and precarious state of health of my young cousin, wore off, however, after a few days spent in her society.

I found, to my infinite satisfaction, that it was a real pleasure to her to meet my mother's wishes in everything. It was so strange a thing to me to find myself among new people, and to feel that I belonged in any way to them, or had any part in their affections, that the friendly manner in which the old gentleman shook me by the hand on our first meeting, and welcomed me to Wales, the familiar tone with which he always, from the first, addressed me as "nephew," won for him immediately my gratitude and respect. Lilith speedily

ingratiated herself with my mother, whose presence, though hitherto unknown to her, seemed almost as if it had been the one thing wanting to her happiness, so well did they agree.

My mother, who had been, as was natural, extremely overcome on her first arrival at Plas Owen, seemed happy in finding herself, as it were, suddenly blessed with a most attentive and dutiful daughter; whilst Lilith found a mother's void supplied with a degree of sound good sense and experience joined to a tender affection, which she had not had the good fortune to meet with in her own parent. Sir Caradoc jocularly complained that he should be left without society if Lilith were monopolized by my mother, and he was pleased to add, her cousin Ambrose,—a complaint for which there certainly was some foundation.

Lilith was then nineteen—older than I had imagined from my first impression of her very youthful appearance: she was slender, delicate, and remarkably pleasing in manner and expression, although not decidedly handsome. Such, at least, was the judgment usually passed on her by those who saw her for the first time; but it mostly hap-

pened that those who were admitted to further acquaintance found that her sweetness of smile, her gentleness of voice, and the pure, though delicate, tint of her complexion, shaded by her soft brown tresses, had something more than mere prettiness in it. And when those who, like myself, had the advantage of seeing and knowing her in her family for weeks and months together, were called on to pronounce on Lilith's charms, less than the word Beauty would hardly satisfy their exigence.

My cousin and I soon became great friends : her shyness, which was great at first, gradually gave way before her amiable desire to make everything pleasant to her newly-found relations, in a country to which one at least was a stranger.

Sir Caradoc's gout left him little leisure to attend to the affairs of his estate ; so that I was frequently his companion in a *tête-à-tête*, in which he would explain to me, with no little vivacity, the peculiar character of the country and of his neighbours, interrupted, at times, by twinges of pain, which never failed to give both point and asperity to his observations.

His property, I learnt, was enormous in extent,

and he had rather added to than diminished it. But it was like all mountain estates—except where there were mines—comparatively unproductive ; and his consequence depended more upon its extent and the number of freeholders, poor as they were, that inhabited it, than upon the actual rent-roll. His name, the traditions of his family, his constant residence and general hospitality, his speaking the language of the people (in which Lilith, too, had been carefully instructed), all gave him a degree of local importance in which he had no rival near. I used to accompany him in the rides he now and then took over his domain, when he would mount a quiet Welsh pony, by whose side I have walked many a mile up and down the most rugged mountain-paths. The whole style of life and existence was so new to me, that my health and spirits benefited exceedingly by it. My uncle was surprised to find me so good a mountaineer ; and I rose in his opinion when I performed some feats of hard exercise, which proved that neither the relaxing air of the Campagna nor the confinement of the studio had prevented my limbs from acquiring the strength or the agility natural to my age. In

one of our rambles over an insulated, but not very high mountain, called the Dinas, from the top of which a vast panoramic view of the surrounding valleys and their rocky barriers laid open the most map-like prospect that could be obtained of two adjoining counties, Sir Caradoc suddenly addressed me :

“ Nephew Ambrose, do you see that rock jutting from the end of yon rugged moor, where, as I told you, we—tchut—that is I, before my gout—used to go after grouse and mountain hares? Well, just beyond that rock, which we call Craig Ddu, begins the property of his Excellency, as they all call him hereabouts. You know, of course—you know who his Excellency is ?”

I was forced to confess my ignorance.

“ Well, I thought everybody in the six counties knew his Excellency by name or reputation, not by sight, indeed, for seldom does he show himself in the land of the Apreecees. He has long held government appointments abroad, not much to his advantage I suspect, by the way in which he has been selling one bit of land after another during the last sixteen years. The whole of that range of mountain under Craig Ddu, down to the brawling trout-

stream we just crossed at the fall near the mill, was his till I bought it—and down the glen as far as Hendre—and then to Llyn Vawr, where you will kill me a few trout some day—all was the land of Apreece Lord Corwen, till having spent more than he received from it, and miles of still better lands besides, he found himself, to use his own words, under the necessity of adopting a policy of exchange : in other words, laying it at the feet of his neighbour.”

“ You did not fail to profit by it, sir,” I replied ; “ and surely the land and its inhabitants will be no losers. I have seen some of those foreign residents in Rome, and though his Excellency was not one of them, I can imagine that some of their number must pay dearly for their foreign expenses.”

“ Were you acquainted with any of our hopeful noblemen there ? ”

“ With none of that description. One I knew of a very different stamp, Lord Montacute, who is an honour to his family and title ; but I believe he is not connected with this part of the country.”

“ Montacute ?—No, he is from the south of England. Fine, old family enough, I believe, related

to the Hungerfords and Courtenays ; but nothing Welsh among them."

The latter sentence was quite decisive as to the place any family would hold in my good uncle's estimation ; for though nobody was more above prejudice as to individuals, when character or talent were to be considered, he could not overcome the national, or, more properly, provincial prejudice of race.

" Beyond Carn Emlyn, which is the mountain to the left of Craig Ddu, lie some deep and well-wooded glens, or combes, as we call them—and beyond that is the sea."

" Where are your mines, sir ?" I asked.

" Still further to the left, and happily not near enough to annoy me with the smoke of the works. There is coal or metal, or something appertaining to the infernal regions, all under the ridge of Carn Emlyn, as they tell me ; but not a pickaxe shall be laid into its venerable and shaggy sides in my lifetime : and the lead companies of Liverpool have learnt that from me by this time, by dint of repeated refusals, and a pretty cross one the last, I warrant you. Zounds they won't let a man keep his own lead nowadays !"

Nothing irritated my uncle so much as the gradual and stealthy encroachments of trade and money upon the hitherto untouched wilds of his native mountains. It was the more amusing in him, because he was not one of the small squirearchy outbidden or overridden by a stronger interest : he not only had possessions enough to keep his place in the county, but even to improve it ; he benefited indirectly yet sensibly by all the improvements made within the neighbourhood, and scrupled not to avail himself of them when it suited him ; but then only. At other times he inveighed against the upstarts, the purse-proud shopkeepers, the Saxons, and sundry other denominations of the industrious tribe who displeased him by their new presence in the land of King Arthur and the Round Table. These rides with Sir Caradoc became daily more interesting to me, as they led me to make an acquaintance with his sterling but original character, at the same time that I gained a knowledge of the country and of its delightful scenery, which would not otherwise have been in my power. Our society at Plas Owen was but small. My uncle's house was open to all visitors and travellers recommended to him : they

of course came but occasionally, and we were never a numerous party. His health prevented invitations on a larger scale, which would have entailed a degree of fatigue beyond the powers either of himself or his daughter.

I also assisted Lilith in her mountain excursions, and daily grew more attached to her society.

My mother's delicate health, and the divergence of our views with regard to Carmen, had, as was inevitable, created a sort of want of confidence between us—but on that subject alone. It was painful to me in the extreme to confine my feelings to my own breast, and at length I found myself, almost unawares, confiding the inmost secret of my heart to the innocent and compassionate Lilith. She listened with the utmost interest to the recital of my attachment, and I speedily found it the sweetest consolation to pour into her patient and sympathizing ears a thousand details of the rise and progress of my love, and of the difficulties by which it was encompassed.

I must not omit to speak of another person, who soon became both my companion and friend, the Rev. Markham Haydon, rector of the parish of Bettws, in which Plas Owen was situated.

He was a man of mild and amiable character, many years my senior, but not on that account the less suited to my then uninformed and in many respects uninstructed nature. Besides Bettws, he held also the living of Aberdyfi, belonging to the Corwen family, when he was first instituted to it, but which had now passed into the hands of Sir Caradoc Owen, with many other possessions of the same declining family. I was at first rather surprised at the familiar footing on which Mr Haydon seemed to stand with the circle at Plas Owen. But after a little time, I found that however great the pride of family or power might be in my uncle's heart, formality was not the order of the day in his home. He was naturally too warmhearted a man for that : the customs of the country and of his neighbourhood were against it ; and every man was his friend or his enemy, and treated so with perfect openness, without descending to the mezzo-termini of hauteur and distance. As to Mr Haydon, whose appointment, though now of long standing, had taken place many years after my mother had quitted Wales, nothing could exceed the pains he took to be useful both to her and to myself on matters of religious instruction, which, although never neglected

by her, had hitherto been somewhat wanting in my education ; and, in so doing, he gave unquestionable evidence of the high order of both his character and talents, which his reserved demeanour kept too much in the background.

Mr Haydon had acted as preceptor to my cousin Lilith from her early youth, and had worthily fulfilled his trust. He had carefully trained her young mind in religion, in charity, and humble-mindedness. This last point, so essential, was perhaps the best gift his tuition had bestowed on his fair pupil ; for, had she not met with this kind and truly Christian guide, her path might possibly have fallen in the same direction as that which had rendered her mother so harsh, haughty, and unfeeling, not to my parent alone, but to all her family. Lilith, supposing her education to have been left (as without the accidental presence of such a man, such a churchman as Mr Haydon, it would have been) exclusively to her mother, must have been miraculous, indeed, if she escaped the contagion of that pride by which she was surrounded. I shuddered at the thought when I saw the amiable, gentle being my cousin now was, that so slight a difference

in circumstances—in themselves quite accidental—might have constituted her an inferior and far different character.

My mother by degrees grew more and more attached to Lilith. She had not been without misgivings that the child of her overbearing sister-in-law would prove a proud and unaccommodating niece, not unlikely to have been early prejudiced against herself. Most welcome, therefore, was the surprise which the intercourse of the very first evening awoke in her mind, and which every day increased, to find Lilith, if not what is commonly called clever, at least endowed with an excellent judgment, reserved but affectionate manners, and the temper and sweetness of an angel. Her pursuits were of the most simple and rational order. She had a garden of mountain-plants arranged so as to grow almost naturally on the rocks, which started here and there from the verdant slopes comprised within the pleasure-grounds of Plas Owen. These were very extensive, for in an almost alpine country, the ground, being of no value, may be enclosed according to the requirements of picturesque taste rather than economical convenience. The

mountain-copses bordering the deep glen of the Dyfi, and joining the garden and shrubbery, were traversed by shady walks, forming of themselves supplementary pleasure-grounds of miles in extent, by which an agreeable and sheltered way of climbing the mountain-side to half its height was afforded at all seasons. On the other side, the garden opened by more than one gate into the park, which, though lying amid lower and better-timbered grounds, was itself equal in wildness of scenery to the mountain beneath which it lay. It was tumbled into abrupt rocky knolls and fern-covered ridges crowned with noble oaks, in one place suddenly breaking into a steep precipice, beneath which flowed the rapid waters of the Dyfi.

Lilith had also a poultry-yard well stocked with the choicest fowls, Spanish, Cochín-China, Dorking, Friesland, Polish, Bantam, and others. Her bees, too, were a favourite care. The mountain-thyme and other fragrant herbs ensured her a delicious crop of honey, for her bees, disdaining the sweet mignonette and garden-flowers she carefully sowed around their hives, flew ever in the summer's breeze for miles and miles over the furze and heather to

cull their store from a more elevated region. But all these pursuits were her amusement : her business of life she placed in works of more positive utility. Foremost among these was her school, not only established but attended daily and assiduously by herself.

I soon began to take an interest in all the rural and domestic concerns of my cousin ; but my abilities were, unluckily, not of a sort to be of much use in the poultry-yard, or even in sowing of seeds in her botanic flower-garden. It is true I had now and then made collections of wild flowers in the Campagna, and often brought in from my rambles on those grassy wastes, or from the neglected villa-gardens of Rome, some choice bouquet, or wreath for Carmen's hair. I had learnt the names of some few of them, and fancied myself advancing in botanical knowledge ; but here were neither the starry windflowers of varied hue that bespangle the turf of the Villa Borghese, nor the wild flax or rosy catchfly, the odorous cyclamen or narcissus, that enliven the grotto of Egeria. I had to make acquaintance with purple heath and golden furze, and the rougher Flora of my new country. Neverthe-

less I worked for Lilith ; I succeeded in amusing her with stories and descriptions of Italy ; and when ever and anon she would question me about the people I had lived with there, my lips could speak of none but Carmen and Vitelli. Had Lilith been a less simple unsophisticated being than she was, I should have revolted from the idea of making her the *confidante* of my feelings for one who was, and was in all probability ever likely to remain, an entire stranger to her. But there was a charm about Lilith's manner, and a perfect truthfulness, which showed itself in all her conversation as well as in her actions, that completely set my heart at rest upon the subject. At the same time her own knowledge of the world was so slight, that she listened to all I told her about Carmen, about Rome, about foreign lands and foreign life, more as if she was hearing the adventures of some ideal personage than those of persons she saw before her eyes, and addressed as aunt and cousin. My mother also sometimes spoke of Carmen, though rarely, and with the kindness that the knowledge of the precarious state in which we had left her could not but inspire. This of course increased Lilith's de-

sire to learn more of Carmen's history and situation, in which I was only too ready to gratify her. You may conceive what relief it was to my anxious mind to be able to disburthen itself of its cares into such a kind and tender heart as that of my sweet cousin Lilith.

Time wore on, and I became daily more impatient for the promised letter from Lord Montacute. Post after post arrived, yet it came not, till, after making all possible allowance for continental irregularities and other accidents, I almost despaired of receiving one.

Our post at Plas Owen was certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the times. My uncle was so wedded to old habits, and in a way so proud of his distance from London, that he resisted any improvement in this as in many other branches of civilisation.

No great correspondent himself, and therefore seldom receiving letters, except on business, when they were sure to bring him trouble (at least he said so), he grew to hate letters altogether, and could not reconcile it to his idea of a sensible man to be impatient for them. The post then arrived at Plas

Owen just as it had done in his father's time half a century before ; that is to say, when there was no coach beyond Shrewsbury, and the letters were carried by boys, on pads or mountain-ponies, or sometimes on foot over hill and dale for thirty-three miles. He might now have them from a much nearer point, and with a trifling additional expense, daily ; but that involved a change, and my mother pleasantly declared that her brother would willingly pay double to avoid one, or to escape getting his letters oftener than in 1750.

A letter from Milan did at last arrive safely to my hands : I saw at once it was from Lord Montacute, and you may imagine with what breathless anxiety I broke the seal. The news it contained was briefly this :—that Carmen had at length recovered her strength after her long and tedious illness, and in a little time would have been equal to the fatigue of resuming her engagement at La Scala, had it not been that the fever, which, like all fever of its class, leaves strong traces behind it of its effects on the constitution, had deprived her of all power of exerting her voice. This was pronounced to be not an uncommon case, though generally only

a temporary ailment, and of course as such must have been often within the experience both of the physician and of those connected with the theatre. But the necessary condition of a cure was the total cessation of all attempt at exercising the faculty she desired to recover, for a long time at least, and in addition to this, which was peremptorily ordered by her medical adviser, a change of climate was strongly recommended. The previous change from the soft relaxing atmosphere of her native Rome to the sharp, subalpine air of Lombardy, was thought to have aided in bringing on the attack : a still warmer climate than that of Italy seemed naturally pointed out as the remedy. It so happened that Vitelli's deceased wife, who was a Spaniard, had been entitled to some property in Cuba, and Vitelli himself had often felt inclined to make a voyage to the West Indies for the purpose of endeavouring to establish his claim to it. As soon as the physician had expressed his decided opinion that Carmen required some far greater change than a mere journey from one part of Italy to another, Vitelli had eagerly embraced the idea, long abandoned from various domestic causes, of a voyage to Cuba.

Carmen, who herself wished to leave Milan, readily came into her father's plan ; and when Lord Montacute wrote they were making active preparations for their departure. Lord Montacute was himself on the point of starting for his long-intended journey to Egypt and Palestine.

As to other topics, he strenuously recommended my writing to Vitelli, fully and openly entering on the subject we had discussed together before parting, and writing soon enough to obtain an answer before he and his daughter should have left Milan for Cuba. He mentioned incidentally that Melchior Kranitz had left Milan in a fury of disappointment (I could guess the cause), and had retired to bury himself in Hesse. It was now that I felt the full benefit of having made my good and simple-minded cousin the confidante of my love. I communicated to her the whole of the intelligence I had received, and asked her advice upon it. She smiled, and said :—

“Do as your heart bids you, and you cannot be wrong. Write,—write honestly and openly, as I am sure you will, and as your good friend recommends you.”

I resolved to do so, and found that the counsel of one who knew far less of the world than myself—and of such affairs as yet nothing—was the wisest I could follow. For to say the truth, anxious as I had been to write to Vitelli, I shrank from the task when the moment arrived to execute it, and my weak purpose drew strength (I am ashamed to confess it) from the artless advice of a young and inexperienced girl.

My mother rejoiced at my growing intimacy with Lilith, though she little guessed the footing it was based on. I had promised her not to write to Carmen for one year : this did not, I judged, preclude me from writing to her father. I wrote then, declaring my love in passionate terms, and asked permission to marry the object of my early and devoted attachment as soon as fortune,—or industry, in which, as Vitelli knew better than any one, I was not deficient, should enable me with strict prudence to settle in life.

The letter despatched, I was happier, and waited impatiently for an answer : my sole consolation being the unfeigned sympathy of my amiable cousin.

CHAPTER X.

He has been taught by misfortune to be serious; for that I love him: but misfortune has not taught him to be humble; for that I love him the more.—MACKENZIE.

In love I desire that my desire may be weighed in the balance of honour, and let virtue hold the beam.—SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

A MONTH'S patience was well rewarded by a letter from Vitelli, in answer to mine, which had been rather slow in reaching him. He wrote at length, unwilling, as he said, to leave me in the least doubt or suspense as to his own feelings on the subject nearest his heart as well as mine, and desirous to place before me, as clearly as possible, the position in which all parties must henceforth consider themselves to stand. He set me at ease in regard to my anxiety for his daughter's health, by telling me that she had certainly gained strength, and in some

degree recovered her voice, but only in speaking : she was still incapable of singing, had she even been allowed to do so.

Her spirits were, as might be expected, greatly depressed, but he trusted that time, aided by youth and repose, would soon perfectly re-establish her. His journey towards the sea, Genoa or Leghorn, would take place in a few days, as he had already heard of ships likely to sail from either port about the time when they would be ready for the voyage. After giving me all this very necessary intelligence, his letter proceeded to touch upon other topics far more interesting to myself. He reminded me of the difficulties which beset the commencement at least, if not the whole, of an Artist's career ; and taking for granted that I was not inclined to desert the path which I had voluntarily chosen as my chance of distinction in life, candidly informed me that it was his especial desire to see his beloved Carmen the wife of one who might rise to eminence in the same line as that to which her father had been so long and so enthusiastically devoted. Viotelli's letter was like himself, frank, honest, and kind. As if the general tone and intention of it,

including his own satisfaction in accepting me as his future son-in-law, were not in itself the highest and most grateful compliment, he thought right to state distinctly that he considered me capable and likely to succeed in the Art of Sculpture, and ultimately to gain the highest honours of the profession. He had entered thus largely into the subject, as he did not mean to write again before his departure : promising, however, to inform me of their arrival in Cuba, and of the result of his voyage. This being the case, he suggested that I had better not write again, but await the end of the year fixed by my mother before opening the subject a second time either to himself or his daughter. One only difficulty he foresaw, and without saying so in terms, he gave me to see that it would be little less than insurmountable. He feared that my own family might object to the alliance. This, he said, was one reason for waiting, waiting at least till I knew them better. On his part he could not see his child brought into a family in which her talents would be undervalued, or her birth and profession looked on with prejudice or dislike. He wished both her and me to continue in the line we had chosen re-

spectively, considering the Artist's life the truest and most earnest mode of proving and developing the energies and powers of the human mind, and of raising man to the highest sphere of which he is capable in this life.

He concluded with a most affectionate prayer for my future happiness and welfare, addressing me rather in the terms which a parent would use to a favourite son, than in those of a master to a scholar.

My reflections, after the perusal of this letter, were far from being unmixed. On the one hand, I was assured of the hearty consent of Carmen's father, although that consent was in some, nay in a great degree, conditional. But freed from the apprehension of difficulties on the one side, was I equally secure on the other?

I knew too well the nature of my mother's character, as well as her present disinclination, to call it by its softest name, towards an alliance with Vitelli, not to fear the raising of obstacles almost insuperable in that quarter. She would be of course supported in her views by all the pride and provincial exclusiveness of my uncle and his family, and the combination could not fail to place my duty in

a most difficult and embarrassing position. In this predicament I abandoned the idea I had hastily formed of showing the letter to my mother: feeling, however, the absolute want of the power of confiding in somebody, I resolved to communicate the tidings I had received either to Mr Haydon or to Lilith. On second thoughts, I determined to trust my secret solely to the kind yet prudent understanding of the latter. I was walking with my letter in my hand, absorbed in the various thoughts that crowded upon my mind in consequence of the news it brought me, when I suddenly perceived my cousin standing close to me. We were in that part of the shrubbery nearest to her own garden, and at no great distance from the house.

"Good morning, cousin," said Lilith, smiling, "I am sure you have a letter of importance to-day, for I never stood five minutes near you before without being seen."

"I must beg your pardon," I replied, ashamed of having been found in a state of such abstraction, "I have indeed received some intelligence which is of the highest importance to me, and which gives me cause for much serious thought. Yet I am glad I met you here."

Lilith evidently did not like to ask me any questions ; but replied, " I feared you might wish to walk alone, and therefore, if you have something to think of, I will not be in your way."

" No, Lilith, you are just the person I wanted to meet. Let us take a stroll this fine morning through the park to Nant y Glyn ; and if you will allow me, I will talk to you a little of my present doubts. Yes, and more than doubts,—my present and future difficulties."

" I am ready," she answered, and putting down her garden-basket, her constant accompaniment out of doors, she tied her pretty straw-hat a little closer to her face, and looking the image of rustic prettiness and simplicity, took my arm, and we were soon under the umbrageous oaks of the park. " Read this, Lilith," I said : " you know from me already the state of my affections, and the engagement to which, on my side, I consider myself as pledged : read this, and counsel me."

The letter being in Italian, and moreover, written in that crooked character, uneven and disjointed (most unlike the Italian hand of our copy-books), in which the writers of that country, and the clever

men of most others, delight to puzzle their correspondents, Lilith was some time deciphering its contents, even with the assistance I afforded her. When she had mastered the substance,—“ This is a good man,” said she : “ I understand now perfectly all you have told me of the uprightness of his character, and of the openness of his dealing with every one. It is also so truly and fitly expressed for the purpose intended by it, namely, that you should neither deceive yourself, nor imagine, however unlikely, that he was deceiving you upon any point relative to your future hopes, that I can see that it is the work of an earnest and sincere mind enlightened by virtue as well as by general ability. The advice he gives is sensible and just; the words are those of a father, anxious for both son and daughter; and I can only recommend you patience and implicit confidence in the truth of two persons whom you know far better than I do. This will enable you to submit, as you ought to do, to the temporary restrictions required by the parents on either side.” Lilith’s advice was too sensible not to make a great impression on me. If she had proved a patient listener to my oft-

repeated tales of suffering, love, and disappointed hopes, I must say that on my part she found no inclination to dispute the soundness of her opinion. I could not but wonder, on reflection, at my own boldness in having made my cousin so far my confidante on a most delicate subject. I had broached the matter to her one day, in the warmth of my heart, when she had inquired the cause of my seemingly unreasonable melancholy. I answered, without consideration, and my secret was in the knowledge of another ere I had time to recall my words. I was far from repenting of this now, but at first I had accused myself of little less than treason to her, the thought of whom was the inmost treasure of my heart. After much more experience of the world now than I had then, I can say that Lilit was one of the most unspoilt characters I ever met with: you are surprised that I should say this of one who had never been out of her own little circle, but believe me, it is not the less remarkable on that account. Children of nature, as they are called, run their own risks, and are exposed to dangers peculiarly their own; girls especially, and still more if only children, and bred up in the country,

are apt to become too much their own mistresses at an early age. Vanity, the rock on which so many perish in the great world, is but too nearly matched by Pride, and ideas of self-consequence, in the country. Too much acuteness and worldly wisdom for youth in the capital, is often balanced by too little knowledge and crude notions in the province. Haydon, who knew her better than I could at that time, perfectly agreed with me in the estimate I formed of Lilith's character.

But I shall weary you with my digressions. My mother seemed always pleased to see me seated or occupied near my cousin. Lilith was never unemployed: the care of her father's house gave her daily occupation, and the attentions which his feeble health required filled up also much of her time. Often when seated by her at the family tea-table, or when silently observing her diligence at some ornamental work, have I been led involuntarily to contrast my fair cousin's appearance with the dark and brilliant beauty of her whom I had left, I knew not for how long, to seek her fortune in the other hemisphere. As I contemplated the placid countenance, the smooth outline of her delicate profile, I could

not but compare Lilith with Carmen, and admire in the one the fair example of domestic worth and feminine accomplishment ; while I gave in my secret soul the palm to the high talent and artistic genius of the other. But why, said I mentally, should not the virtues of domestic life, and the cultivated talents belonging to a gifted mind and finished education, be united in the same person ? I could not speak of Carmen in my mother's presence, nor did I in general wish to allude to her, or to our past Italian life in any way, save to the only person who seemed to enter into all my feelings on the subject, namely Lilith. My thoughts therefore were imprisoned in my own breast, unless I happened to find myself alone with my cousin.

Forced to submit to the law imposed upon me by a stern necessity, I wrote a long and grateful answer to my kind master, and, as I thought, future father-in-law. I entered warmly and openly into the state of my feelings with regard to the situation in which his decision had placed me. I gave a promise of implicit adhesion to his will, taking at the same time the opportunity—the only one I was likely to have—of repeating in the fullest manner

my eternal devotion to his daughter. I urgently begged him to write long and often to me during his absence from Europe, and concluded with a request, that, as I was prohibited from writing to Carmen myself, I might depend upon his laying before her the true sentiments of my heart.

Easier in mind after having despatched this epistle, I turned my thoughts to another object which I had long had in view, but which I had not had courage as yet to begin upon. It was to resume in earnest the practice of my art, to which I had now been too long a stranger. I was not become indifferent to it : my change of life and situation had made no alteration in my fixed intention of resuming sculpture as a profession, even if Vitelli's letter, and the desire therein expressed, that Carmen and Carmen's husband should lead an artist-life, and rise each in their vocation to the highest rank of artistic excellence, had not given an additional spur to my inclination.

I had no materials or tools at hand for anything that might require finished workmanship. Neither statuary marble nor alabaster of proper quality were to be found among the Welsh mountains, and

slate or granite were not substances I had been accustomed to work in. I procured, however, the finest clay of the neighbourhood, and, as every one knows, decomposed granite is the finest material for moulding.

At length with a small modelling instrument I always carried in my portfolio, two old knives ground down according to my orders, and a few other make-shifts which I had had fashioned under my eyes, or rather almost made myself in the forge at the mines of Nant y Glyn, I contrived to mould these lumps into heads, flowers, animals, and such small specimens of the art ; and a good stock of materials having been safely conveyed to my own apartment (for my uncle could not bear to see me occupied upon anything that recalled the profession of my unfortunate father), I set to work upon two statuettes that I had proposed to myself to execute, as memorials of the two persons whose image was nearest to my heart. I had so long been in the habit of mentally comparing their different yet equally amiable characters, that the idea attached to each was, as it were without a metaphor, engraven on my heart. I had need therefore of little

reflection to produce the design, and after a slight preliminary sketch on rough paper, which I afterwards enlarged in black and white chalk upon the board of a deal-box which chanced to be in a closet attached to my room, I proceeded to model at once in the clay that I had procured.

I need hardly say that the first of the two statuettes that I began upon was that of Carmen.

Memory served me, I am sure correctly, with the proportions, the attitude, the graceful *pose* of her tall and noble figure: her head, perfectly Grecian in form, her fine and expressive features, her tasteful and at the same time classical manner of arranging her hair, the draperies of the antique costume, so well adapted to that noble and harmonious style of beauty, were not to be forgotten: and after little labour, but infinite care, I completed a resemblance that satisfied even myself. In the accessories, which in a simple and severe work of art ought to be but few, I had made a strict rule to myself to follow nature as closely as possible: the character of the Muse of Music, Euterpe, which I had chosen to personify in Carmen's likeness, required but a few flowers for ornament, either as a chaplet for the head, or suspended from her lyre.

I chose a crown of roses as the most poetical, and at the same time most beautiful, with which to adorn her who to me was the queen of beauty ; copying minutely, and chiseling after the finest selection from Lilith's garden, which then lay before me. It was not till I had placed the wreath with my own hands upon that smooth, open brow, as yet unruffled by the storms of life, that I perceived with dismay that the lovely flowers, with which I had myself crowned my beloved Carmen, were thick set with thorns. I had copied nature's work, and reproduced the rugged with the soft, the sharp stings of fate together with the symbol of beauty and happiness.

"Let it be," I cried, painfully struck by the unwelcome omen ; "God wills it so : be it then mine to cherish and support that true and confiding soul through the ills as well as the joys of life."

I determined to alter nothing in the statue ; but the evil augury sank deeply and sadly into my heart. It was some time ere I could turn with pleasure to the destined figure of Lilith—it seemed as if my last work ought to have been devoted to Carmen.

If my statuette of Carmen was an effort of mind

and memory, that of Lilith was a work for which I had the model ever before my eyes. I saw her daily surrounded by her favourite doves, pigeons, and other birds, tamed by herself, whose love for her seemed bordering on intelligence. I saw her ever either receiving with kindness applications from the poor in her little sitting-room near the garden, or visiting the sick in their own cottages, which she earnestly sought, though generally in vain, through the indolence of the people, to make more tidy and comfortable. I saw her steadily three times in the week going to the village school, examining the children, and encouraging the school-mistress; trying to make the children understand rightly the English lessons, but never foolishly disparaging to their uncultivated understanding the Welsh, which was universal in that district. Her labours were almost as much with the teachers as with the taught; for she found that many, who thought they understood English well enough, understood it but partially, which in practice became little better than understanding it wrongly, if such an expression be allowed.

My design represented Lilith as Charity, that

being, as I soon satisfied myself, her predominant characteristic. Her countenance, both in delicacy of feature and innocence of expression, was eminently suitable to this idea. Her figure was not strictly speaking, good; perfectly straight when seen in front, it was only on turning round that a slight inequality of form was perceptible. This would easily be concealed by drapery.

My desire was to produce such a likeness of Lilith as would win the approbation of her father—whose taste would certainly not be gratified by any statue, however beautiful, independently of its resemblance to his daughter; and at the same time to execute a work of art capable of satisfying my own judgment, and of pleasing my mother, whose long residence in Rome had made her a far better connoisseur in sculpture than her brother.

No personification of Lilith, however, would have contented myself, that did not at once signify her virtues as well as represent her beauty. Charity seemed to me to fulfil the requirements of both ideas.

* * * *

On a little knoll, close to the edge of the torrent, where it quitted the park of Plas Owen to enter the

narrow glen through which it rolled towards the sea, stood a humble but very ancient church, partially concealed by a clump of fine oaks which rose high above its mossy roof. Near the low door rose an aged yew-tree, whose vast trunk, the growth of centuries, supported several huge branches twisted into a variety of fantastic forms, partly by the freaks of nature, partly in consequence of the many young boughs that had been torn from it to form bows for the peasantry in stormy periods which preceded the downfall of the last Llewellyn.

Under the shade of these venerable trees would the rustic population of Bettws assemble before church-time, waiting until the sound, issuing from the lowly bell-cot, should summon them to unite in common worship within the massive walls of their parish church. Low and mossgrown as it was, it showed no symptoms of decay: built of rough blocks, almost of Cyclopean magnitude, it seemed to bid defiance to the elements and to time itself. The churchyard commanded a view of mountain and sylvan beauty of no common order, and was in itself a spot eminently calculated to inspire thoughts of happy death to the world, and of a more blessed state beyond it.

The graves were modestly adorned, according to the pious use of Wales, with living flowers, as Nature's simplest, purest offering to the Creator. Rosemary and thyme, wallflower and wormwood—even pinks, and rarely a rose, decked these humble resting-places of the children of the soil. The tombstones were generally fine large slabs of dark slate, bearing for the most part Welsh inscriptions. Apart from the trees, in a more open and therefore conspicuous part of the cemetery, stood a very ancient massive Cross, formed of a single block of very hard red sandstone, and bearing illegible traces of inscriptions, and mystic knots, and intricate sculpture of netted patterns, above which the figure of the cross was predominant. It was called the Cross of St Gowan, but the church was dedicated to St Winifred. Some very old inscribed slabs of the same dark red stone lay flat on the ground: one was in Welsh, the others in Latin, but all evidently of a time long prior to English domination. The interior of the church was low, dark, and cave-like in appearance; some rude monumental effigies much defaced, and some names of early British or Roman sound, appeared against the walls. The effect was gloomy in the extreme; and

the contrast between the almost cheerful abodes of the dead without, and the solemn temple for the living within, tempted me to exclaim on first seeing it, "There is nothing in the churchyard so sepulchral as the church itself!"

Limestone being scarce in that district of hard grit and slate rocks, the honest people, to do honour to their church, went to the expense of buying an immense quantity of lime, with which the church-roof all inside and out was thickly daubed, till it had the appearance of lying under a fall of snow. The very walls of the churchyard had undergone the same glaring style of decoration. There was, however, one tomb of a strikingly different style and character from the rest, and of no distant date either. It was a simple headstone of Gothic form, within which was a Cross in rather bold relief, and of correct and elegant design, which caught my attention immediately. The flowers planted round it seemed of a choicer description than the generality. In answer to the inquiries I naturally made about it, I learnt from Lilith that it was the grave of a lady who was said to have died in great affliction, or after some misfortunes, which she was not able to explain to

me, and about whom great mystery had ever been observed. She was reported to have been a near relative of their neighbour Lord Corwen, but in how near a degree she knew not. Her death had taken place at Corwen Castle, the last time of that nobleman's stay there, and he had never since returned to it. Mr Haydon, she believed, possessed more information respecting this lady than he liked to give, having known her in early life, and having been called to attend her deathbed in consequence of that previous acquaintance. The careful execution and keeping up of this interesting tomb, she added, was the especial care of Mr Haydon, who seemed to bestow religious attention to it.

"Why did you not inquire more deeply into such a singular circumstance as the death of this poor lady?" I asked Lilith.

"I was not disinclined to do so," she answered; "but finding that nothing was said about it in our family, I resolved to wait, and so became shyer and shyer each day of asking questions. I believe Mr Haydon would tell you—that is, if you chose to ask him—but I cannot. You do not know how shy I am even with my dear father. I believe I never

ask a question, except on the commonest subject, without showing this shyness—unless it be of you, Ambrose,”—added she, blushing, as if in proof that I too was no exception where her shyness was concerned. I looked at her attentively as she spoke, and as I did so I could not help considering how few persons there were in the ordinary world around us capable of appreciating the rare and singular delicacy of my cousin’s character. As these thoughts flashed through my mind, I said rashly, without pausing to consider the effect of my abrupt speech, “I wonder whom you will marry, my dear Lilith;” but immediately repented of my words, as likely to give pain to that fine and sensitive nature. “Few would be worthy of you,” I hastily added; and I doubt whether I mended the awkwardness of my first speech by the rather stupid compliment of my second.

She took it well, however—and saying, “I never think of such things, dear Ambrose; I am too happy and too well occupied, I hope, to dwell on idle thoughts, and the idea of change is in itself unwelcome to me,” turned round to look at the view. I was on the point of speaking, when she

continued, "I am not clever or captivating, I know, and I have not learnt to dread the possibility of being an old maid. If I began to wish on such a subject, I fear I should be presumptuous enough to expect a great deal more in a husband than is to be met with. Because—I can hardly explain myself—few men of independence of station and character will condescend to seek an heiress : few of those who do seek them possess the independence I wish rather to meet with, than to confer."

CHAPTER XI.

It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tost upon the sea: a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage-ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), and to see the errors and wanderings, and mists and tempests, in the vale below: so always that this prospect be with pity, not with swelling or pride. Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.—LORD BACON.

ONE evening, in the middle of summer, I had accepted an invitation to dine quietly with Mr Haydon in his pretty parsonage-cottage of Bettws. The days were long, the weather such as July ought to be, but too often is not, in a northern and very mountainous district. There was yet time enough, after our short repast, to take a stroll round the village before sunset, which we intended to enjoy the

sight of from the Dinas rock, and to visit the neatly kept churchyard, perfumed partly by the pinks and wallflowers that decked the simple graves of the peasantry, and partly by the rector's neighbouring hayfield, newly mown.

Mr Haydon's conversation was always agreeable to me. He was a man of natural good taste, more cultivated in the walks of literature than of art, and of greater knowledge of mankind at home than I could pretend to, who had seen them so much more abroad. For this reason, his remarks were useful, as well as interesting, to me ; and, with true kindness, he made a practice of dilating on all those points of which he found me comparatively ignorant, and wherein it was needful for me in my present position to be informed. The sun was already down, and twilight was approaching, when we entered the churchyard, on our return to the rectory. I paused before the tomb which had already so strongly riveted my attention, and respecting which I had obtained such imperfect information from Lilith. I stopped to read its touching inscription :

“ MARGARET H——— 18—.

“ Plead thou my cause, O Lord.”

Some choicer flowers than usual ; grey stocks, sad rosemary, and humble thyme, were there : the gaudy gillyflower—even the rose—the lily—were absent. The stone itself was plain, except a cross which was sculptured in the best but simplest manner above the name.

“ How I admire the impressive silence of that inscription,” said I. “ The mortal is commemorated, the immortal is appealed to ; nothing is told to excite or to satisfy curiosity ; nothing to record the cares or the vanities of this world.”

Haydon sighed, but made no observation ; probably foreseeing that I should ask him a question which he could not prevent, yet was unwilling to answer.

“ You must know something of her who now rests beneath this gravestone, Mr Haydon ? ”

“ I do,” he replied gravely—more gravely than I had ever heard him speak before. I looked up and observed in his countenance signs of strong emotion, which he strove with difficulty to suppress.

“ The sight of that lowly grave recalls to me,” said Haydon, “ a train of such mournful reflections,

that I never willingly enter upon the subject of the erring, but, I truly believe, sincere penitent who lies beneath it. Since you have touched upon so trying a subject, I will, once for all, give you so much of the history of my unfortunate cousin as will explain the mystery which hangs over her fate. But pardon me if I request you never to return to the subject.

"Rather pardon me," replied I, "for having unintentionally wounded feelings whose sensibility I respect; and pray reserve the tale for another moment, if so inclined, and spare yourself the unwelcome task of answering my inconsiderate inquiries."

"No;" rejoined Haydon, "the ice once broken, it is better that I relieve myself of what I foresaw must be imparted to you sooner or later, were it only to avoid a recurrence to what you will see must be a most painful topic."

I bowed in silence. My friend, without further preface, began his melancholy story.

The lady who lies beneath that yet fresh and newly sculptured stone, was a relation, a near relation of mine. We had known each other intimately

in childhood, nay I may say in infancy, for I cannot remember the first time of our meeting. Our affection, at first that of childhood, soon ripened into a warmer feeling—that did not last however—for, at an early age, she became attached to, and married another. Her husband was one who, if not entirely suited to her ardent disposition, was yet, at least, her equal in all worldly and external qualifications, and one, too, whose honorable character might have commanded her respect and esteem even after the freshness of love in so light a heart had faded. She seemed to love him.....Yes, she seemed..... Alas, how deceitful is the human heart! Perhaps she had loved him; but in one luckless, fatal hour, she left him and her two children, after four years' marriage.....and fled with an unprincipled seducer. I can say no more than that, after having passed through those trials that are the sure, inevitable consequences of such sin as hers, she died in this neighbourhood about five years ago. I saw her, and heard her prayers: I witnessed her sincere and agonizing repentance.".....

Haydon paused, deeply affected: he rose from his seat, and going into another apartment sought

to recover his emotion. After some little time had elapsed, he returned, bringing with him a small pocketbook, which he opened in my presence, and took from it an enclosure, which he placed in my hands. It was a long tress of silken, brown hair, a shade lighter than that of my cousin Lilith, to whom involuntarily my thoughts reverted (I know not why), as I looked at the cherished relic. Around it was a written paper, containing the following lines, which, on obtaining permission from him, I perused with deep sympathy :—

I stand beside a nameless grave,
A nameless grave : and is this all
Of that fair girl, that blooming bride,
The lovely image to recall ?

Whom I remember in her pride,
Whom I remember all too well ;
A nameless grave her shame to hide,
A nameless grave her tale to tell !
Yes, it is all : lost is her name,
Wrapt in a cloud of grief and sin ;
For she left all on earth beside,
A husband's true and loyal side,
Through the wide world to follow him.

And he, he was a grave, stern man,
With many a furrow on his brow,
And many a shadow on his face :
I see him then, I see him now ;

Yet never, never, could I trace
What gave him power such love to win,
From her, who left her honor'd place,
And all the kindness of her race,
So through the world to follow him.

Of what then further did betide
I know not nor could ever tell,
But she lived with him till she died,
And if he cherish'd her, 'twere well.
But there was no one there beside,
Beside that couch of pain to dwell,
No mother's breast, no sister's tears
To bid the parting soul farewell !

Well, she is dead, and he lives on,
And sterner grows, none see him smile ;
On him the eye of beauty beams
As brightly as it did erewhile :
On him the world heaps power and praise,
For he has all men seek to win,
But none who on that face do gaze
May read the heart that lies within ;
Whether he thinks on her who died,
Died for his love in shame and sin ;
Who left on earth all else beside,
Through the wide world to follow him."

I folded up the paper and its contents, and returned it to him : tears were in my eyes as I did so, the true expression of my unfeigned sympathy with the sorrow of this amiable and excellent man ; but I could not speak. He understood my silence

however, and pressing my hand affectionately, said, " I now leave the subject of this sad remembrance, my dear young friend, begging you never to mention it in the presence of your innocent cousin—and, in general, to avoid speaking of it to any one."

He looked earnestly at me as he spoke; and when he dwelt with emphasis on the words, " your innocent cousin," I could not help suspecting that he had been made the confidant of what I began to feel aware were already my mother's views for my future life. Those views, though I knew them to be entertained in the fulness of maternal love and anxiety for my happiness, were so entirely contrary to the scheme my own heart had conceived for itself, that they commenced to distress me considerably. I could not bring myself to enter on the subject with my mother, for reasons which I have already stated to you. I was tempted then by the evident intention of my friend Haydon to give me an opening to explain the whole circumstances of my love and half-engagement to Carmen, and was on the point of describing the peculiar position I stood in with regard to her, when the reflection that I had no right to betray Carmen's secret as

well as mine, flashed across my mind, and I checked the confession that was almost upon my lips. My embarrassment, nevertheless, I am sure did not pass unnoticed ; but was easily to be accounted for on the score of the touching narrative to which I had just been listening.

My time passed quietly and agreeably enough, save that I daily became more anxious to hear of the arrival of Vitelli and his daughter at Havanna. Patience was my only resource, so I resigned myself as well as I could to the inevitable delay, satisfied that they would not neglect to write to me by the earliest opportunity from Cuba.

About that time a great stir was created in our tranquil district by the reported arrival at the castle of Lord Corwen, and the simultaneous intelligence of his intended sale of a further large portion of his already diminished property.

This news affected my uncle in a manner which I should almost have called comical, had not the addition of any fuel to the flame of his already rather testy temper been rather a serious matter to the inmates of his house.

“ So,” said he, “ my Lord Corwen is come down,

for the last time, probably, and no one in the principality cares whether it be so or not."

"Why for the last time, sir?" I inquired; "I saw in the newspapers that he was expected to retire shortly from his post abroad, and what more likely than his residence or more frequent visits to his paternal estate?"

"Trust him for that, nephew. Lord Corwen will never leave the public service while it is his advantage to stay in it. I know him well enough for that. He comes here only to raise money, probably by actual sale of some property, and most likely of those mines which lie just beyond my mountain of Bryn Madoc. Well, I know nothing about it to-day; may be I shall know more to-morrow. Bryn Madoc works are no bad purchase, and they are not near enough to poison this side of the country with their detestable smoke. Well, we shall see, we shall see."

It was very plain to see what was passing in my good uncle's mind at that moment.

We happened to be seated at the breakfast-table, and waiting for the post, which, as I have already told you, we received, in consequence of my uncle's

whim, nearly a day later than all the neighbourhood, when a messenger was announced with a letter to Sir Caradoc Owen.

"So this is a letter from Price Jones, my steward, to tell me.....that my Lord Corwen is come down, and talks of paying me a visit.....So,...Jones says he will come over to-morrow morning with maps and papers—well, be it so. I know why the good man is in such a hurry; all for the good of the property, eh! Why, what's this? another letter from London by post: another sort of thing, I'll warrant. Not on business this,—an elegant epistle in a French envelope—from Lord Corwen himself."

This my uncle read in silence, only exclaiming, "Why I ought to have had this yesterday before his lordship came down," an observation which only provoked a smile from all, and drew even from Lilith the remark,

"So you would, papa, if you had but come into the new post-office plan, like all our neighbours."

"Don't pretend to tell your old father he might have been wiser, for you will never convince him between this and midnight," he answered, good-

humoredly ; “ but I must make up for it by sending a groom over to Corwen Castle, and inviting him here to-morrow.....no help for it.....wish he had staid abroad.....however, no great harm in it if what Jones says be correct ; and Jones is always in the right, about other people’s affairs at least, though he will hardly let me do what I will with my own. My Lord Corwen and I have always been good friends—or rather good strangers, good neighbours, with all Europe between us—so it can’t be helped, it can’t be helped.”

Thus the old gentleman went on muttering while seating himself at his writing-table ; and it was not till he had turned all the contents of every blotting-book over that he seemed to find a sheet of paper to his liking. Lilith stood dutifully by his side, offering him pen after pen, which he threw aside, saying he could not write with these modern pens—in truth he rarely wrote with any, and never very distinctly at best. At last the simple note to invite Lord Corwen was written, and, with Lilith’s attentive assistance, sealed and directed, and finally given to a servant to be conveyed immediately to Corwen Castle. This done, Sir Caradoc was not

long before he alarmed himself with a new difficulty. "Who shall we get to meet him?" said he; "I shall have to amuse him myself, I suppose. You, Ambrose, must talk to him of Italy and the Continent; he, of course, will talk to the ladies—Haydon will come and help us; but none of our squires, though they are worth a hundred of him, would get on with him. As a young man I was the only one who knew him at all in his own county, and heaven knows how little that was. We have not now met for ten years at least."

But my uncle's troubles were not doomed to be so soon at an end. Mr Haydon was called away by a summons to the bed of an aged and perhaps dying relative in England, and I was finally left to be the only company to meet the guest of whom Sir Caradoc appeared so shy. A circumstance which embarrassed me much more than that, was, that in some subsequent transactions with Lord Corwen, I was called upon to act as confidential agent on the part of my uncle. But I must not anticipate this part of my story. The invitation thus sent was accepted, and the day but one after its despatch, Lord Corwen arrived at Plas Owen.

His appearance and manner did not in any way disappoint my expectations. I was prepared to see a nobleman, a man of the world, uniting dignity with ease, and high-bearing with amenity of manner, and I found it. But I was hardly prepared for the coldness and reserve of conversation, the measured though still not offensive *hauteur*, which kept me, as a stranger, at an involuntary distance, whilst it relaxed but little even towards my uncle, with whom he had formerly been acquainted. But that matters little between men of a certain age and standing in life ; a few words interchanged in the tone and manner of good society set them sufficiently at their ease, even if that ease never ripens into anything beyond the civilities of the hour. These were first impressions. The next day he had found out—no great discovery—the tone and tendency of each of the persons of our small party, and conversation became accordingly more general. I found, as he gradually unbent in our society, that Lord Corwen was a man not only of great and cultivated talents, but also possessed of greater positive information than anything I had hitherto heard of him had given me reason to imagine. He was, of

course, at home in all that related to foreign countries, and that led him to talk much to my mother, and at times to me; but then there was a tone of condescension, which, though it encouraged my observations and replies, did not on the whole please me. I thought him in reality a more agreeable, and perhaps a more amiable man, than his very artificial manner permitted him to appear. His figure and appearance were greatly in his favour. He seemed about forty-five years of age, old rather than young for that time of life, with a countenance too expressive of sternness and self-will to be prepossessing, until a wish to please, or a sudden thought that he had a part to play, occasioned his features to relax into a smile. His discourse with my uncle was chiefly on country matters, of the particulars of which he wished for information; but he never spoke of making Corwen Castle his residence, or responded to my uncle's good-natured inquiries as to his supposed intention of coming to live in Wales. After a time he seemed much disposed to pay attention to my cousin. He had treated her at first as a child, which from her very youthful appearance was a mistake any one might

fall into, especially as her unobtrusive manners did not give the idea of her being the mistress of the house. Some slight but intelligent remark which she happened to make, arrested his notice, and he soon addressed his conversation to her with an evident earnestness and wish to please, which my cousin's perfectly artless and natural manner seemed to quicken rather than repel. Lilith had no idea of conversation for the purpose of shining or display ; still less had she ever imagined the possibility of talking for the sake of drawing out character and disposition, which was but too much the object of Lord Corwen and men of his stamp. To him a new character was a new game ; he would start, pursue, and hunt it down as an intellectual sport ; and Lilith's was a mind so perfectly new to him, that he promised himself the highest interest in making her out, as he would have termed it, had he spoken his thoughts.

Lord Corwen, though a thorough man of the world, was nevertheless a philosophical man of the world : he would study, analyze, and I might say anatomize, character to get at a new phase of human nature. It was not difficult to see how different

the calm and passionless society in which he now as it seemed for the first time found himself, must have been from that of the polished but artificial courts to which he had been accustomed. Lilith bore the scrutiny of his dark eyes with a composure which astonished me. She seemed interested by his conversation, and unembarrassed by his courtly endeavours to introduce a tone of compliment into his discourse, which was certainly quite new to her. Her attention was bestowed more upon the information or the idea than upon the man: her mind was yet far from the notion that she must please in society (the great object of girls in general): she was content to be pleased.

Meanwhile I was a spectator, and not an unconcerned one, of the play going on before me. I mistrusted the principal actor; I nervously watched the conduct of her with whose young feelings I fancied he was inclined to sport. I had not heard much good of his previous life; and occasional traits of impatience betrayed a degree of passion to which the cold superciliousness of his general demeanour was an extreme contrast. His philosophy was clever, but I recoiled from its material, its irre-

ligious cast ; and I frankly confess that I felt half inclined to quarrel with Lord Corwen for the attention he bestowed on Lilith.

Lord Corwen remained some time at Plas Owen, daily ingratiating himself more and more with all save myself. He listened to my uncle's long stories, till the old gentleman declared him the most agreeable man he had ever met with ; and the few caustic or humorous anecdotes which Lord Corwen occasionally introduced were sure to put Sir Caradoc in good humour, even on a gouty evening. The question of the sale of large portions of his mountain property, together with the famous works of Bryn Madoc, which my uncle had an eye to, had been early touched upon. The bargain was near its completion ; for Lord Corwen declared he would trust Sir Caradoc in everything, and no Mr Price Jones should interfere between one gentleman and another. My uncle, who was, to say the truth, a little afraid of his strict man of business, though perfectly incapable of managing an affair without him, was flattered and delighted at this confidence. Lord Corwen acknowledged that he wanted money, but that it was indifferent to him, who never meant

to live in Wales, whether he sold a smaller or larger portion of his estate, provided the price obtained covered the sum he required at the moment.

My uncle, who could not do without Mr Price Jones, was obliged to be closeted with him more than one fine morning, when he would rather have been out with his harriers, and, as I had afterwards reason to believe, heard a good deal more of Lord Corwen from his trusty steward than he was ever likely to have discovered by any light of his own.

My uncle called me one day into the room he was accustomed to call his study, not unaptly so termed, considering in what line his studies had usually run ;—fowling-pieces, fishing-rods of various sorts, nets, tools, whips, and such paraphernalia taking the place of books—and desired me to sit down between himself and Mr Price Jones, whom I found in attendance, with sundry bundles of papers in his hand. They were looking over with great attention a very large county map, the only thing that could be called a literary or scientific production in the room : while two or three smaller maps and plans lay open upon the table.

“ You see, Sir Caradoc,” said the agent, “ that

your old property borders the Corwen estate for three miles already ; beyond the first mile, that is from the Cairns on Cairn Ddu, to the limestone rock where you opened a new quarry last year, a distance of a mile and three quarters."

"Craig Uchaf, I suppose you mean."

"Exactly ; for that mile and three quarters the boundary has never been settled, has often been disputed, and cost you know how much in litigation."

"The land not being worth a shilling an acre, on either side, I believe—money thrown away, money thrown away—Well, Mr Jones, what of that?"

"Lord Corwen's present proposal to sell you, for no unreasonable sum, the lands on the eastern slope of Cairn Ddu, will give you a great command of country, and put an end to all such useless and extravagant law-expenses."

"So much the better, but you don't call me extravagant or litigious, Mr Jones ; I claimed my own, I defended my own, I know not how many hundred acres of moorland and grouse shooting, and surely no man would see his own ground occu-

pied by a stranger before his eyes, and not be litigious; no man I say, no Welshman, would be anything else, I am sure you agree, Mr Jones."

"So much so, sir, as to be heartily glad to see you in a way to be free from the temptation in future."

"Well, say no more about that. Let us go to the more promising parts of the bargain—the mines and works of Bryn Madoc, and what else?"

"All that tract of meadowland, and you know, sir, how scarce and valuable it is in our mountain-district, that lies along the bottom of Glyn Avon, by the river side to Maesmawr, from Llansadwrn, next the west gate of Corwen Park, down to your own mill of Melin monach."

"The very thing I have wished for all my life," exclaimed my uncle, almost starting from his chair, in spite of age and gout; "Oh, if I could but shoot over those meadows, and call them my own next Christmas—but it won't do"—he added with a sigh, looking at the walls well hung with all sporting gear, too bright and in too good trim to show signs of having been used for some years at least.

"You may call them your own now, Sir Caradoc,

for a few thousand pounds. There will be no finer property in Merionethshire with yours united to it ; and the other parcels which I have not mentioned, not having yet received particulars from the steward of Corwen estate. Lord Corwen seems to have a positive pleasure in proposing to you these advantageous purchases."

" I don't quite understand that, Mr Jones," said my uncle.

I nevertheless imagined that I thoroughly understood it, and subsequent events proved I was right in my conjecture. I did not, however, hazard any observation at that moment, feeling the delicacy of my position in my uncle's family did not sufficiently authorize my interference in so grave a matter as this appeared to me likely to become. The mystery, however, was unveiled sooner than I expected.

On the afternoon of the day on which the conversation I have related took place, Lord Corwen asked my uncle's leave to invite to Plas Owen a French nobleman of his acquaintance, who was making a tour of England and Wales, and who had written to him at Corwen Castle, to announce himself as a visiter upon an old invitation, which Lord

Corwen had given him at Spa. Sir Caradoc, whose hospitality and whose dislike of foreigners were exactly balanced, was probably never so much puzzled in his life as to the answer he should give to his request. Old Welsh hospitality, and a sort of superstitious feeling that it was unlucky to send away a stranger guest, prevailed, and he gave the desired permission with a better grace than I expected.

Lord Corwen despatched a messenger with a letter to meet his friend, at, or near the castle, and to direct his course to Plas Owen by the nearest road.

M. le Marquis de Clermont Marigny was a characteristic specimen of the *noblesse* of the south of France, where his family had possessed large property before the revolution; and had inherited all their aristocratic prejudices, without the corresponding feelings of high and chivalrous loyalty which usually accompanied them. He was in short, although willing to be taken for a cavalier of the *ancien régime*, a very decided courtier of the new. He frequented all the watering-places in Germany, protesting at the same time he could not bear to

tear himself from "*Cher Paris*." In the dissipated society of such places, Lord Corwen had met—had played with—and had lost money to him. No wonder that they were extremely intimate.

He arrived accordingly, and passed some few days at Plas Owen. More I think would have exterminated him: though he professed to admire every thing extremely. He certainly had a great respect for the evident wealth and possessions of Sir Caradoc, who, he declared, was the "*Marquis de Carabas du Pays de Galles*," and a mixed feeling of pity and admiration for the once grand and lordly mansion of Corwen Castle—which he had just seen—while he congratulated its owner on being about to get rid of it as of a useless encumbrance, "*dans un pays presque barbare*."

As he spoke little English, the Marquis, while Lord Corwen was otherwise engaged, was often thrown upon my hands. I had therefore much opportunity of discovering his nature and disposition, which were far from being to my taste, and also of hearing much relating to his friend, Lord Corwen, which I should assuredly never have heard from the lips of that cold and cautious diplomat.

The result was not favourable. I heard them also frequently talking together, when the free rail-lery of the volatile Frenchman forced the other, *bon gré mal gré*, into taking a similar tone, and extracted from him many a worldly and vicious maxim which at other times he would have concealed. Speaking French, too, the Englishman became comparatively careless of his audience, and forgot that he was betraying himself to one who had been as much in the habit of mixing in foreign conversation as himself. One morning that I was occupied in copying a law-paper for my uncle in the library, I perceived Lord Corwen was also sitting at the other end of the long and rather dimly lighted apartment, with a newspaper in his hand, which had apparently ceased to interest him, since he was intently considering the spots in the carpet, and tracing the pattern with his cane when the Marquis de Marigny entered.

"*Eh bien, Milord,*" said the latter, "*vous voilà complètement desœuvré. Est ce la France, la Russie ou la Turquie qui vous occupe dans ce moment ?*"

"*Rien de tout cela, mon cher ami ; c'est plutôt*

à une Sultane qu'au Sultan que je pense à l'heure qu'il est."

" En effet, Votre Excellence a des raisons pour regretter le séjour de cette capitale où vous avez si long tems brillé—où nous avons si bien joui de tous les agrémens de la vie, tous les deux, si je ne me trompe."

" Il n'est rien de tout cela. Je m'en vais laisser le soin de faire la cour aux dames à mes attachés, qui ne manqueront pas de remplir cette partie de leur devoirs : je m'en vais....."

" Vous faire Oapucin à ce qui me semble."

" Je ne pense nullement au célibat : comme je viens de vous le dire, je pense à toute autre chose."

" Bah—que je suis bête—vous parliez tout à l'heure d'une Sultane ; je parie cent louis que c'est celle que nous avons connue à..... choses.....la petite Melanie—n'est ce pas ?"

" Au contraire, je veux remplir le trône trop long-tems vide des Corwen de la manière la plus légitime....."

" Votre Excellence est trop sage, trop philosophe, pour qu'elle aille faire une sottise ?"

" Cela sera comme vous voudrez, mon ami : écoutez ;

lorsqu'on a tout perdu, il faut penser à se remettre."

"Et le moyen, je vous en prie?"

"Une riche héritière, jeune, bonne enfant, et bien née, n'en serait pas le plus mauvais."

"Parlez donc en homme du monde dont vous avez tant d'expérience—Milord, à la vérité je ne vous reconnais plus.....une femme! une épouse,—oubliez vous donc ce que nous avons toujours dit et pensé des femmes d'autrui—eh? Je vous aurais cru le dernier à vous précipiter dans l'abîme....."

"N'importe, Marquis; ce que je sais je sais, ce que j'ai pensé je le pense encore; je les connais trop bien les femmes pour les estimer mieux qu'elles ne valent: mais enfin c'est un parti pris."

"Je veux toujours parler avec respect des demoiselles—surtout des demoiselles Anglaises—encore des riches à plus forte raison—mais....." Here the Marquis whispered a word or two in Lord Corwen's ear which seemed to excite some not agreeable reminiscence, for he started up, and exclaimed:—

"Cela ne fera rien—enfin je veux jouer la partie—je n'y perds rien."

I heard no more, for some persons entered the

room, and the dialogue between these chosen friends was suddenly interrupted.

"*Vous rêvez, Milord, faute de distractions agréables,*" were the last words of the Marquis, as they quitted the library together, leaving me to reflect on the prospects of my poor cousin, exposed to the attentions of such interested admirers.

CHAPTER XII.

Unter tausend frohen Stunden,
 So im Leben ich gefunden,
 Blieb nur eine mir getrue;
 Eine, wo in tausend Schmerzen
 Ich erfuhr in meinem Herzen,
 Wer für uns gestorben sei.
 Meine Welt war mir zerbrochen,
 Wie von einem Sturm gestochen,
 Welkte Herz und Blüte mir;
 Meines Lebens ganze Habe,
 Jeder Wunsch lag mir in Grabe,
 Und zur Qual war ich noch hier.—*Novalis.*

What then was I? She slumber'd with the dead.
 Glory, and joy, and peace had come and gone.
 Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled
 Which steeped its skirts in gold? or, dark and lone,
 Doth it not through the paths of night unknown,
 On outspread wings of its own wind upborne,
 Pour rain upon the earth?—*SHELLEY.*

EVENTS followed each other in rapid succession at
 Plas Owen, and the ordinary quiet seclusion of the

old manor-house seemed destined to be broken in upon after a most unusual fashion. Another visiter shortly after this made his unexpected appearance among us ; and if the arrival of so startling a personage as the Marquis de Marigny had occasioned no small sensation, that of Mr Seymour Littleton, *attaché* to Lord Corwen's Embassy, with despatches for the Ambassador, was a thing altogether extraordinary in the mountains of North Wales.

Whatever the importance of the mysterious documents which were contained in the shining red morocco box of which the *attaché* was the bearer, that importance, great or small, was not likely to lose anything in the hands of the diplomatic young gentleman himself. He arrived in a chaise and four, accompanied by a handsome lion-poodle, at a very convenient time before dinner, and having insisted on seeing his *chef* immediately, was conducted into the dressing-room of Lord Corwen.

His Lordship seems not to have occupied himself much with the despatches, for in less than ten minutes he issued from his apartment with Mr Littleton, and led him to my uncle's room. Sir Caradoc of course pressed him to remain, if urgent business

did not prevent it, and I, who chanced to be present, shall never forget the slightly satirical smile with which Lord Corwen said :—

“ My friend, Mr Seymour Littleton, Sir Caradoc, contrives always to be the bearer of despatches which require consideration, rather than immediate answers : in the present case their importance does not consist in an urgent call for reply.”

“ We shall be happy to keep Mr Seymour Littleton,” said my uncle, really rejoicing in having another person capable of taking the Marquis off his hands. “ In half an hour, then, we meet at dinner ; and pray, sir, send away your horses. I can send you the first twenty miles whenever your diplomatic duties call you away.”

We all met at dinner, and the new comer did not fail to do his best to make himself agreeable. He seemed delighted to meet with the Marquis de Marigny, whom he made an old friend of at once, though he had never seen him before. Divided between a desire to exhibit his profound acquaintance with foreign manners and languages and a wish to *faire la cour aux dames*, he would willingly have talked French all night to the Marquis, but that he

would fain not miss the opportunity of engaging Lilith's attention at the same time.

Now, nothing is so favourable for that sort of byeplay as good French conversation; but as French had never been the order of the day in an old Welsh manor-house like Plas Owen, Lilith was unequal to keeping it up sufficiently to enable Mr Littleton to talk to her and to the Marquis at the same time with any effect. His own courtly nature prompted him also to make a great show of deference to his host, and to listen to my uncle's stories, not neglecting the sort of *aide-de-camp's* attendance he thought it becoming to bestow on his ambassador. He remained with us some days, in spite of the urgency of his despatches; and I soon suspected that the hourly-increasing devotion which he payed to my cousin was inspired by the fact, he had by this time discovered, of her being an heiress.

What added, in my eyes at least, to the comedy of Mr Littleton's position, was, that his new friend, the Marquis de Marigny, had accomplished the same discovery, and, whether with serious views on her hand, or only moved by a spirit of rivalry, and a Frenchman's general politeness towards the sex,

was continually seeking Lilith's society, and complimenting her in very bad English—or oftener in his beautiful Parisian French—on her many qualities, real and supposed, which he thought capable of being heightened by the honour of his approbation.

Between the assiduities of these two frivolous admirers on the one hand, and the more respectful, but at the same time more serious courtship of Lord Corwen on the other, poor Lilith, with all her single-heartedness and inexperience, had full need of the good sense and discretion which she eminently possessed. I took care to watch over her interests at a distance, purposely abstaining from too great a show of even the familiar intimacy of a relation, lest my motives should be mistaken, and another element be added to the imbroglio already existing.

The *attaché* was pleased to take a condescending notice of me as soon as he found I had lived abroad, and could enter into the topics of his conversation with as much knowledge as himself, particularly in regard to Italy, of which he knew nothing.

He endeavoured, after one whole day's acquaint-

ance, to draw from me a circumstantial account of Lilith's fortune, prospects, and other particulars, which, as he said jocularly, but meant seriously, would be of some importance to the happy man who was destined to make an impression upon her heart.

At other times he would hint at his own hopeless attachment to Princess B. or 'Countess C., at this or the other court, blinded by his vanity to the fact that such was not the way to procure credit for a new and sudden passion in the heart of a simple and unsophisticated girl. One day, during a walk in the park, it happened that Mr Seymour Littleton (attended as usual by his faithful poodle), considering me perfectly uninterested in the matter, discoursed at some length with the Marquis on the perfections of Lilith, the fine domain of Plas Owen, and the probable mass of money that must be accumulating somewhere for the fortunate individual whose bride she might one day become.

"*Mais, mon cher,*" said the Marquis, "is it not possible dere may be oders persuaded of dese tings as well as you?"

"No doubt, M. le Marquis, but it must be re-

served for one happy man alone to persuade that charming young lady—not so difficult a task for some.....”

“ *Diplomate? vous allez dire, M. le Secrétaire ; n'est ce pas ?* ”

And the Marquis, relapsing into his native tongue, as was his habit ere he advanced a second step in the difficulties of English conversation, glanced slyly from under his arched eyebrows at the self-satisfied *attache*, who delighted, as he well knew, in being called Secretary, however prematurely, and who replied, with an air of great complacency:—

“ It is precisely the sort of thing that would suit me.”

“ *Ou à M. l'Ambassadeur Milord Corwen, avec son château, et ses terres sur les frontières de cette Place,—Place Owen.* ”

This was spoken with that indescribable finesse with which the French know so well how to point an observation; particularly when it is calculated to wound an enemy or a rival. As he uttered it, the Marquis glanced up at Lord Corwen and Lilith, who just then came in sight, and who appeared to be

engaged in a more animated conversation than usual. Lord Corwen had been telling her of the various objects of interest in the countries from which he had lately returned ; and had tried, not with much success, although with considerable amusement to his fair listener, to convince her that life abroad was at least equal, for all agreeable purposes, to life in Wales. Lilith would not be persuaded ; and, while rejecting both his arguments and conclusions, in the playful manner natural to a girl of her age, appeared to us at a distance rather as if she were repaying her devoted admirer with a smile, than repelling opinions which she considered injurious to her beloved Principality.

I never saw a change so complete as that which took place in Mr Seymour Littleton's countenance as his eye caught sight of the pair who were approaching. The sudden consciousness of the heinous sin he was preparing to commit in becoming the rival of his *chef* struck deep into his soul ; the equally sudden conviction that Lilith's smiles must be for the Head of the Embassy rather than for the *attaché*, flashed across his mind ; and, crest-fallen, he could only reply to the satirical Marquis :—

“ Behold the happy man ! ”

The scene, to me, was so irresistibly comic, that I took another walk, which placed some thick evergreens between the parties and myself, to indulge the risible propensity which I could contain no longer.

When I returned to them, I found Mr Seymour Littleton with his hat off, bowing to Lilith, but at the same time addressing Lord Corwen.

"Has your Excellency any commands, any answer to the Secretary of State, for me to take to London? My friend, the Under-Secretary, informed me despatches would be ready about this time, and I feel it my imperative duty to present myself in Downing Street previous to repairing to my post."

"Why so quick, my young friend?" said Lord Corwen, "I do not want to despatch you—but if Princess B. or Countess C. have issued their commands, far be it from me to interpose an obstacle."

"I rather wish to go, my Lord," replied Mr Seymour Littleton with great solemnity; and he certainly looked as if he spoke truth at the moment.

* * * * *

We all returned to the house, nobody enjoying the scene more than the Marquis de Marigny.

That Mr Seymour Littleton, however, considered it no laughing matter, we were speedily convinced, for he actually took his departure from Plas Owen that same evening.

I was sufficiently jealous of Lord Corwen's attentions to Lilith to be on the watch for everything that could give me an insight into his personal character. What I learnt was quite enough to assure me of her rejection of his addresses, did she but know by what sort of man she was sought. But the difficulty was how to acquaint her honourably and delicately with what might so nearly concern her future happiness. I had no feeling or motive beyond my cousin's welfare; my engagement with Carmen put everything like real jealousy on my side completely out of the question: yet it was certain that, did I appear in the matter, my interference would naturally be set down to a more direct interest in Lilith's affections than either was or could be the case. I then thought of entreating my mother to put her upon her guard, considering that she could do so with more propriety than my-

self, and with equal regard and attachment. But then another cause of hesitation, personal to myself, intervened in the reflection, that my making a *confidante* of my mother on that particular subject, would strengthen her ideas of my inclination towards my cousin,—a mistake which I could not safely encourage, and which I was most anxious to avoid. Altogether it appeared to me an ocean of difficulties, whichever way I turned it in my mind.

The Gordian knot, however, was cut by the person chiefly concerned in it, sooner than might have been expected.

Lord Corwen proceeded in the most approved diplomatic manner towards his object. Really struck with the pure and gentle beauty of Lilith's character, unworthy of it though he was himself, and desirous perhaps at the same time to save the wreck of his fortune by a stroke of policy which flattered his self-love by its cleverness, while it gratified his vanity by its success in another direction, he wrote a studied business-like letter to my uncle, proposing to him for the hand of his daughter; while, at the moment of sending it into Sir Caradoc's study, he himself sought an interview with the un-

conscious girl, who little dreamed of becoming the wife of a prodigal of more than twice her own age. The letter to my uncle, after a few commonplace expressions of attachment to his daughter, and well-turned phrases of resolution to make her future lot happy, &c. &c., entered into what the writer doubtless considered more forcible arguments.

He offered to settle the whole remainder of his estate, Corwen Castle included, upon his future wife ; so that, as he broadly stated, Sir Caradoc's heirs might eventually unite the entire property of both families, which would give them almost a principality in North Wales. He did not hint at any doubt of acceptance, but concluded by saying, that he was going at once to repeat the same proposal to Miss Owen herself, and that immediately afterwards he would have the pleasure of waiting on her father.

Lord Corwen, as his letter intimated, instantly sought an interview with Lilith. He declared his attachment to her in glowing terms,—the more flattering from a man of his ordinary cold and reserved manner,—stating, probably with truth, that in all his knowledge of the world, he had never met with

any one whom he desired to make his wife but her. He protested also, but not with equal truth, that he was tired of the life of politics and diplomacy ; that foreign society no longer gave him any pleasure ; that it had always been the wish of his heart to settle in the country, and live as the lord of Corwen Castle ought to do among his tenantry ; that he would take her for one brilliant season abroad to appear as ambassadress, and to enjoy all the honours of high rank and station, before quietly fixing themselves in Wales to fulfil the duties of their situation, in which alone, he was convinced (as he was sure, from her tastes, she must be also), that domestic happiness was to be found. He concluded by saying, that he had already communicated his proposal to her father ; so that she could have no scruple in giving her answer on the score of requiring a previous reference to her parent—little likely to thwart her wishes under any circumstances, as he conceived.

Lilith, as I heard afterwards, was very near sinking under the effect of this totally unlooked for proposition. She was so free from all vanity, and so little prone to consider herself an object of atten-

tion, that she was quite unprepared for what a girl of the world would probably have meditated on a dozen times at least, during the visit of so distinguished a guest in her father's house, if only as an amusing day-dream, or as a flattering speculation for her idle thoughts. Summoning courage, however, Lilith courteously and calmly thanked him for the honour of his preference, but informed him that she had at present no desire to marry; that her father had given her absolute permission to remain single as long as it suited her inclinations; that she did not wish for or think herself adapted to a great situation, whether public or private, at home or abroad. Expressing her grateful sense of the flattering terms in which he had explained his intentions towards her, and still more for the undeserved distinction of which his language was the evidence, Lilith mildly, but decidedly gave a refusal to Lord Corwen's addresses.

Pride, wounded but yet predominant, restrained Lord Corwen's feelings within bounds, which his deep mortification had well-nigh broken.

"Am I then, Miss Owen, to consider your determination as final?" he demanded.

"As irrevocable," she answered with becoming dignity; and then adding gracefully, "I wish you all happiness," hastily withdrew before the native kindness of her disposition had led her into a lengthened conversation, of which the practised man of the world would not have failed to profit.

Retiring to his apartment full of anger and disappointment, Lord Corwen was met by a servant, who presented him with a letter from Sir Caradoc Owen. He scarcely looked at the address, thrust it into his pocket, and did not read it for some time afterwards. It proved to be a counterpart to the refusal he had just personally received, expressed in Sir Caradoc's own plain but well-intentioned manner.

This did but add fuel to the flame, and I was not surprised (having guessed what was going on), and certainly not a little relieved, to hear at dinner-time, that Lord Corwen had sent for post-horses, and was already on his road to London, accompanied by his friend the Marquis de Clermont Marigny.

The sale of the Corwen property went on notwithstanding the awkwardness occasioned by these

events: its owner was too deeply involved to be able to postpone any means of raising money, and had long lost all feeling of attachment to the country or to the property of his ancestors. He would also have scorned to allow Sir Caradoc the possibility of suspecting that he was influenced by pique on account of the refusal of his daughter's hand: he prided himself moreover, like a thorough statesman, on his command of temper, and always made a point of conducting matters of business, whether relating to his own private affairs or to those of the government, as if passion and temper did not exist.

My uncle wishing to terminate the purchase as speedily as possible, and desiring to consult his London lawyer on some particulars connected with it, decided on sending me to town with full powers to represent him in any way that might be deemed advisable. This commission was far from being disagreeable to me, as there I hoped to gain, though I hardly knew how, some sort of intelligence of the person most dear to me. I only feared that it might be necessary for me to meet Lord Corwen on some part of the transaction, which, to say the least, would have been very disagreeable. That,

however, was not required of me I found to my great satisfaction. One day, during my stay in town, I chanced to be walking in Hyde Park—the only place where I found I could breathe in the neighbourhood of the smoky capital of our empire, when I perceived a fine-looking though elderly man hastening from another path towards mine, evidently with the intention of speaking to me. His air and dress had something foreign, and as I imagined familiar, about it, but I could not for some moments remember where I had seen him, till, on a nearer approach, I recognised the commanding form and intellectual countenance of Professor Scheiner, whom I had known at Milan. The earnest and true-hearted German hurried towards me, and with a degree of warmth, and at the same time of agitation that I could not at all account for, accosted me suddenly in the abrupt manner so usual with his nation, by exclaiming :—

“ Well, well ; *mein lieber Herr* ? So ! we have much to speak together—much—much to lament.”

Surprised at his manner, though truly glad to see him, I drew him towards a more distant and private part of the park (which happened to be very full at

of grief and despair. Scheiner watched by my bedside as the most careful nurse would have done,—listened with patience to my broken sobs, and trying to comfort me, entreated my permission to write to my mother to inform her both of my illness and of the cause of it. This, however, I would not suffer him to do.

Fortunately my uncle's affairs no longer required an assistance on my part, to which I should, in the state in which I then was, have been perfectly unequal. The Corwen purchase was completed, and the whole transaction now solely in the lawyer's hands.

After a few days I recovered sufficient nerve to converse with my true friend Scheiner on the melancholy subject which had brought us so much together. I summoned courage to write to my mother, explaining my continued silence and delay in returning by the fact of my illness, not concealing the circumstances which had led to it. I felt that I could indeed reckon upon the sympathy of my mother for the loss of our most tried and kindest friend Vitelli, to whose aid, so generously proffered

in the hour of our distress, we owed our extrication from difficulties apparently insurmountable, and to whom I, in particular, was indebted for the professional training which has made me what I am. Nor could I doubt her sincerity in lamenting the untimely death of that young and gifted girl, however far she might be from sharing my own feelings on the irreparable calamity which had deprived me of her.

After some further delay, I had the courage to tear myself away from my sympathizing friend Scheiner, whose kind feelings for the loss of his friends and mine had more than ever endeared him to me. I greatly regretted that he could not accompany me to Wales, where I should have liked to show him something of our country life ; but his own pursuits among the philosophical societies of the capital would not allow this ; so we parted with the warmest and I will say the sincerest professions of regard.

I left town in a state of apathy, almost of torpor, longing only for the tranquillity and rural scenery of Wales, and not a little for the sympathy of my gentle cousin.

But ere I quitted London, I wrote to Feliciani for particulars of the sad bereavement which had fallen on me like a stroke of lightning ; but to this letter I never received any answer.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ein Grab, o Mutter, ist gegraben dir
 An einer stillen, dir bekannten Stelle,
 Ein heimatlicher Schatten wehet hier,
 Auch fehlen Blumen nicht an seiner Schwelle.

Drin liegst du, wie du starbest, unverfehrt,
 Mit jedem Zug des Friedens und der Schmerzen,
 Auch aufzuleben ist dir nicht verwehrt,
 Ich grub dir dieses Grab in meinem Herzen.—Ußland.

It is always a misfortune to step into new relations to which one has not been inured ; we are often against our will lured into a false sympathy, the incompleteness of such positions troubles us, and yet we see no means either of completing them or removing them.

GOETHE.

FOR some time after my return to Plas Owen, I was so completely overwhelmed by the shock I had experienced, that my usual occupations were all suspended, and the journal from which this narrative is compiled was entirely given up. On

looking over a few notes, taken from time to time during those sorrowing days, I discover little that would interest you, or that would be useful to transcribe here. A few reflections, broken thoughts, and expressions of affliction, traced in an unsteady hand, and often blotted by tears, are all that remain of this period of regret and despondency.

It is necessary, however, in some measure to travel back in memory over that dreary space, in order to resume the thread of events which occurred in the intermediate months, after which I shall pursue the course of my story with more regularity.

My mother's reception of me had been kind and affectionate—sympathizing with me for the loss I had sustained, and deeply sorrowing for the death of that lovely girl who had shown the most unremitting attention to her at the period of her deepest affliction. She also sincerely mourned for Vitelli, the kind and disinterested friend of her poverty and of my youth ; and although I could not but be aware that she felt the present state of things was more favourable to her wishes for my future prospects than that which had previously existed, she

considerately left me to my own reflections, and never by the least word interfered to guide my thoughts into the channel she desired. She, as a mother, respected my grief; I, as a son, felt most grateful for her forbearance.

Nothing was said to my uncle respecting the cause of the illness which had detained me in town. He was very glad to see me again, although shocked by the alteration in my appearance, committed as he imagined wholly by its ravages, and had, as I well perceived, grown insensibly much attached to me as his nearest relation, and become in some degree dependent on my help in many details of the management of his estate and other family affairs. But Lilith! I cannot do justice to her tender and affectionate sympathy for my suffering. She alone of all the family knew the full extent of my loss; she alone could measure the depth of my sorrow. With her I could talk freely, expatiate on the bright virtues and soaring genius of my lost Carmen, and from her I was ever sure to receive that comfort which the kind heart of woman is alone able to bestow on the woes of others. I gradually grew more and more attached to my cousin's society,

and no day passed that did not see us for many hours engaged in reading, walking, or riding together, or, if at home, occupied in the same pursuits. Many months passed smoothly, I might say unconsciously away, whilst I was in total ignorance of the hold Lilith had insensibly gained on my heart. My mother observed us ; so, I fancied, did my uncle, but my mother's scrutiny was the closest.

Our family lived in the greatest harmony ; but our happiness was not destined to be lasting.

One day, after having enjoyed herself more than usual in the garden, where she had been drawn in her chair, my mother, on returning to the house, complained of cold. The next day she became seriously ill, and a tertian fever, to which she had been previously subject at Rome, suddenly declared itself, and with such violence that her already enfeebled constitution had not the strength to resist it. There were frequent paroxysms and relapses, each worse than the former. My uncle was in despair ; and Lilith's silent grief, yet active help in all that depended upon her care, warned me that all about her foresaw a degree of danger which I could not bring myself to contemplate. At last I

brought myself to ask the physician what he thought of the real state of my mother's case. He owned that he considered it as utterly hopeless. I well remember hastening to her bedside, from which I was seldom long absent, directly after this fatal opinion had been conveyed to me. I sat down beside her couch, taking the place of Lilit, whose eyes I observed streaming with ill-suppressed tears as she softly withdrew, leaving me alone with that beloved parent so soon to be taken from me.

I looked at her long and earnestly as she lay, and was suddenly struck at the change in her. She seemed to all appearance weaker and more emaciated than ever; the fever indeed had left her, but its cessation could hardly be regarded as more than temporary. Her pale and sunken cheeks, her low and clouded voice, her hollow but sparkling eye, betokened that her state was gradually receding from this world. She perceived my anxious gaze, and raising herself by an effort, greater than from her weakness I should have judged her capable of making, she whispered my name, and beckoned me to approach yet closer to her side. I knelt down and kissed her thin white hands, which lay almost

inanimate upon the bed. I could not speak, but looked fondly at her, and awaited in silence what I now felt might be her dying words. They came at last.....In a few minutes, with slow utterance she spoke as follows :—

“ Ambrose, dear and dutiful son.....you who have been my best comfort, my greatest object through life, hear me, hear your mother's last request.....Hear me first thank God for the blessing he has granted me through many troubles, in you, my son.....God bless you, my child, is my last, my fervent prayer.

“ Dear son, it is now that I feel no obstacle remains to the dearest wish of my heart.....to the desire of your uncle as of myself.....that I ask of you that you should at once formally engage yourself to your good, your excellent, your amiable cousin. Lilith has been to me as a daughter—let me die considering her so in reality. You need not doubt of her consent, I know, well know, for I have long read her youthful heart, nor need you fear the opposition of her father to your union, for it is his earnest wish that you should marry his daughter. Long has this been our settled desire,

but I would suffer nothing precipitate, knowing as I did the state of your affections. It is your uncle's generous wish that you should in this way succeed to the whole of his property ; but this alone, noble as is the future it lays before you, would not have induced me to ask the sacrifice of your early love, had Lilith been otherwise than what she is ; but knowing her as I do, as you do, my Ambrose, what can I foresee but the truest happiness, the deepest and purest domestic felicity in store for you, my son, if you are happy enough to call her wife. But there remains but one thing more, hardly necessary to point out ; but which, nevertheless, it is my duty to lay before you as the ultimate condition insisted upon by your kind and loving uncle. My son, you must renounce Artist Life, and resign all those flattering and illusive dreams of fame, whose end, as I well know, are vanity and vexation of spirit.

“ My Ambrose, promise me this—promise the last request of your dying mother.”

She paused, overcome by weakness and emotion, and I, as I wept upon her bosom, felt that at that moment I could deny her nothing. But this last request was indeed a severe blow to me ; yet how, how could I refuse.

It was but natural that my uncle should expect such a sacrifice on my part, considering the noble generosity that should place me, an outcast, an orphan, the son of a man he had detested, at the head of his house, dowered with fortune, position, all that could make life happy or desirable; and above all, bestow upon me the heart and priceless affections of his only and beloved child. But it was a sacrifice: I did not conceal from myself the amount of that thus required of me, even at that moment of overwhelming feeling and agitation. My prospects changed, my life and fortune assured, I need not toil or work: I might retain my taste, my love for Art; but I fell in my own esteem when I resigned what I had learnt to think the noble career of the Art-Workman. Nevertheless, I did resign it.....By the deathbed of my mother, I yielded!

But few words passed between us. I informed her that Lilith already knew I had not a first-love to lay at her feet, and that, knowing her virtues, her exquisite delicacy of feeling, I could not but feel that her merits were far beyond my deserts.

My mother, with a transient ray of happiness beaming upon her dying countenance, then sent

for her brother and my cousin. They came. They were never far from her sick-chamber.

"Brother," she whispered feebly, "we are happy! My son, my Ambrose, consents with gratitude to all you ask. Lilith, daughter, sweet treasure of my heart, let me place your hand in that of your betrothed. Be to him, as he will be to you, a joy and an enduring comfort in God to the end of your lives. Be to him a wife, as you have been a dutiful daughter to your father: he, my ever dutiful son, true in all trials, firm in all adversities, has been the stay of his mother's weary life, and will be the support of yours. God bless you, my children, God bless my children's children," were the last words she uttered. Faint with the exertion, she swooned, and increasing weakness led rapidly to her peaceful dissolution.

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I followed my mother to her quiet grave in that secluded churchyard of Bettws, now grown so familiar to me. I mourned her loss as that of one who had been an example to me through life of patience under the severest domestic trials, and of resignation to the will of God under the privations of want and

the mortifications of neglect. Lilith, contrary to custom, except in Wales, attended the last duties paid to my beloved parent. She did not accompany the melancholy train, but met them in the church, joining with low and tremulous voice in that sublime service, which, by Sir Caradoc's express desire, was performed in Welsh, as befitting his ancient race of Owen, and as most edifying to the people.

Some months elapsed ere even the preparations for our approaching marriage were commenced. Lilith's sense of propriety, her deep affliction at our irreparable loss, dictated this mark of respect to the memory of my departed mother.

At last, the day was fixed, though at a long date. It was settled that I was to take the name of Owen ; Sir Caradoc, in stating to me his wishes, or rather his commands, on this head, contrived to do so without ever mentioning my father's name.

I had a long and earnest conversation with my cousin. I felt it my duty to tell her, that with all my love for her, all the feeling of affection I now bore her, it was yet imperative I should confess that my first early love was buried in Carmen's grave.

" I humbly ask you, dearest Lilith, will that suf-

fice you? All I have left of heart is thine: it is true, it is faithful, it is devoted; but it is not the first impulsive glow of youth, but the honest, firm love of manhood that I now tender to you. Can you, do you accept the offering?"

Her answer I need not here record. Suffice it to state, that it partook of the tenderness and trust of her angelic character. I was blessed beyond my deserts.

CHAPTER XIV.

As mine own shadow was this child to me,
A second self, far dearer and more fair
Which clothed in undissolving radiancy
All those steep paths which languor and despair
Of human things had made so dark and bare,
Yet which I stood alone—nor, till bereft
Of friends and overcome by lonely care,
Knew I what solace for that loss was left,
Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.
SHELLEY.

——Thou noble soul,
Teach me if thou art nearer God than I !
My life was a long dream when I awoke,
Duty stood like an angel in my path,
And seem'd so terrible, I could have turn'd
Into my yesterdays, and wander'd back
To distant childhood, and gone out to God
By the gate of birth, not death.

ALEXANDEE SMITH.

I WAS supremely happy. Not the least part of my
present felicity arose from the consciousness that I

was fulfilling the dearest wish of my lost parent ; and my heart warmed with the sense of satisfaction which I knew she would have experienced had she been spared to see my union with Lilith.

After ourselves, my uncle was the person whose feelings seemed to receive the most gratification from our intended marriage. His spirits rose to a pitch of buoyancy that recalled the feelings of youth, and he seemed as if he could never finish talking on the subject to every casual visiter who chanced to come to the house. He announced his intention of making me, through his daughter, the heir to all his estates, and prophesied a long course of joy and festivity at Plas Owen.

Our excellent friend Mark Haydon consented to unite us in holy matrimony ; his congratulations, quiet but sincere, were grounded on a deeper foundation than I had suspected, till he made me aware of the reason for it. His fear for Lilith, when she had been reported to give a favourable ear to the addresses of Lord Corwen, had been great indeed ; for, as he now related to me for the first time at length the fatal story of his unfortunate cousin, whose early tomb had so strangely affected me in

the churchyard at Bettws, I learnt that Lord Corwen himself had been the man who had basely drawn her from the path of virtue. Lilith's delivery from that danger, and her present prospect of a happy lot in her earthly career, had given his friendly heart the highest gratification it was capable of receiving—and fortunate did he think himself to have escaped the necessity of detailing the truth of that cousin's unhappy story to a young and artless girl, whose confidence was, to appearance, captivated by the wiles of a heartless and unprincipled man.

When prosperity seems to be at its greatest elevation, when the sun seems to shine brightest on the head of the frail mortal who audaciously dares to think of perfect felicity on earth, it is ever time to be apprehensive of a change. The philosophy of this sentiment is trite to those who, calm and without passion, think upon the affairs of this life : yet, common as it seems to them, no maxim is more frequently neglected by the eager and inconsiderate, when hurried away by love into dreams of bliss and expectations of future happiness. I tried to remember this, and prayed to God to be saved from presumption, to be made sensible of my true duties to

Lilith, and to be made strong to conduct so pure and unsophisticated a being through the shoals and quicksands of the world, which will beset the rich as well as the poor. I strove to open my eyes to the reality of my situation, as having a serious task to perform in my way through life, and endeavoured to convince my understanding that all was not pleasure for me.

The evening before our appointed wedding-day I spent—we spent—as I was doomed never to spend another. We had strolled out together after dinner as was our usual custom. It was the close of a sweet summer's day, and the tranquil repose and hushed calm of Nature harmonized with the deep and serious feelings busy within our hearts, as our footsteps instinctively turned towards one consecrated and familiar spot. Need I say whither their impulsive action led us, or describe how lovingly, trustingly, and with humble prayers for guidance, she knelt with me beside my mother's grave?

Through the old churchyard,
And by the lone yew tree,
This soft summer's eve,
Come, love, and walk with me.

Our path lies through yon wood
Beside thy favourite brook ;
Yet 'mid these grass-green graves
We linger long to look.

Silent our footsteps fall
O'er the chambers of the dead,
Pressing their verdant roofs,
With light and cautious tread.

Soon in this holy place
We shall stand side by side,
And I may claim thee there,
My pure and gentle bride.

Then let us kneel, my love,
Humbly our God to pray
That he would guide our path,
And keep us on our way.

Pray too, while with deep joy
Our trembling hearts are blest,
That in this old churchyard
Hereafter we may rest.

As we returned to the house, I saw at a distance the postman riding away from the door after depositing his bag with the servant in waiting. We consequently hurried our steps to receive our letters ; but ere we had arrived at the gate, the footman advanced with one, which he put into my hand before I had time to ask for it. I saw at once that the

address was in Lord Montacute's writing; and as I had some time previously informed him of my intended marriage, as well as of many other particulars of my present situation in England, I concluded that this was the answer to my communication, which I was now entitled to expect. It bore the postmark of Paris, in which capital I knew he had been residing for some time past, and I was so full of my present happiness that I had not the slightest misgiving of any misfortune that was to follow. I expected, in fact, a letter of congratulation; for the simple reason that I could not imagine that any one of the small number of my correspondents could write to me for any other purpose. Having no secrets from Lilith, and, moreover, wishing particularly to make her enter into all my feelings, and to participate in all my friendships, I was glad of this opportunity of leading her to appreciate the high-toned as well as friendly character of Lord Montacute, of whom she had already heard much from me, and I at once placed the letter in her hands, desiring her to open it and to read to me the contents. She seated herself on the steps leading to the terrace, and with one arm reclining

on the balustrade, and one hand clasped in mine,—the bright moon streaming in clear, pure light upon her delicately chiselled countenance,—she commenced the reading of that fatal letter. Never had I seen her before so interesting, so beautiful; never had I before so thoroughly felt that she was mine—that I was hers. Peace and happiness, true, religious, virtuous happiness, possessed our hearts, and lent a heavenly bliss to our love. Never had I seen Lilith as she was then!—never was I so doomed to see her more!

She had taken the letter, and smiled gratefully at this mark of my confidence,—smiled in the full enjoyment of a happiness that was so soon to be snatched from her (all innocent that she was, and as yet unblighted by taint of sorrow) in this world, never to return. She broke the seal, and as she cast her eyes over the contents I anxiously followed the expression of her countenance. I was at first surprised to see that no sign of gaiety or pleasure manifested itself in her usually expressive features. I thought that, the handwriting being new to her, she had probably found some difficulty in decipher-

ing characters that were not in fact always clear to me who knew them so well. I abstained, however, from making any observation, till seeing a painful rigidity overspread her face, I became alarmed, and was on the point of seizing the letter, which her hand scarcely retained, when, uttering a faint cry, she sank as one paralyzed upon the steps, her head resting against the cold stones of the balustrade.

My fright was extreme. Catching the letter as it fell from Lilith's hand, my eyes were arrested by the words, which were but too conspicuously, too plainly, legible in the very first page, nay almost the first lines.

I read with indescribable sensations that Carmen, whom I had mourned as lost to me for ever, had returned to Europe an orphan, having escaped the fever which had carried off her aged father. She too had suffered ; for, after a painful attendance on her father in the course of his last illness, she had sunk into a state of weakness proportioned to her previous exertions, and her feeble condition succumbed to a frightful attack of the horrible disease which surrounded her ; but youth and constitution had enabled her ultimately to surmount the fatal

malady, and she had revived—to poverty and distress. She had entirely lost her voice, on which her future existence depended, and had been informed by the physicians of that country that there was no reasonable hope of her ever recovering it sufficiently to appear again in public. This, after the wonderful success and celebrity which she had so early attained in her musical career, was a death-blow to her cherished expectations. Her father's efforts towards the recovery of his property in Cuba had proved ineffectual, and she had wisely formed the resolution to return by the first opportunity to her own country, strong in character and resolution to try whatever means her talents and education might enable her to avail herself of as a last resource for a subsistence. She had decided on taking this step, intending to follow the counsel of her two most valued friends—Lord Montacute and myself—could she but be sure of reaching them. She knew not my address, having never heard of me, or received any letters since she left Milan.

These facts were sufficient to account for her having written at once to Lord Montacute, whom her letter had fortunately reached in safety. She

further professed her wish to seek employment as a governess, for which she trusted her education and character might recommend her, either in England or on the Continent. England she would prefer, as the best chance of hearing of or of meeting with me. My eyes filled with tears as I read this melancholy letter, in which, with a simplicity perfectly natural to her, Carmen had entered into these sad details of her late calamities, and of her present destitute situation. I traced in every line that noble spirit of independence, that purity and singleness of heart, which I had known to be her characteristics from her earliest youth, united to a remarkably clear understanding, which comprehended at once without illusion the practical difficulties of her position. In this trying time she had need of all the energy of her character; and to see what was to be done, and to set about doing it with earnest resolution to accomplish it, if possible, was but the natural course of action to so courageous and straightforward a mind as that of Carmen.

It was now to me that Lord Montacute turned for assistance. In a few short lines (I own I thought them cold and stern) he enclosed this letter for my

perusal. He acknowledged the receipt of my previous letter, acquainting him, as I before stated, with my present prospects in England, but he made no allusion to the facts I had then communicated to him. Doubtless, having been the confidant of my deep attachment to Carmen, he had felt surprise and perhaps even displeasure at its apparently facile transfer to another, even though that change was the result of the unhappy error into which the false report of her untimely decease had plunged me. However this may be, he made no remarks upon the affair of any kind, but merely expressed an earnest desire for an immediate reply on my part to his communication. He further informed me, that, relying on her appreciation of his friendship, which, indeed, she had so fully shown, he had forwarded to Carmen a small sum of money by way of loan, and that he intended to proceed to Rome immediately, in the hopes of being of some use to her in preparing for her future mode of life. Lastly, he requested to know my wishes, and to charge himself with any commissions I might desire upon the subject.

All that I now relate at length, I read almost at

a glance. Distracted as I was by the conflicting feelings which this intelligence had excited, I could not but be sensible to the delicacy with which Carmen's beautiful letter avoided all reproach towards myself, as well as to the modesty of Lord Montacute's own expression of his intentions towards the suffering girl. A sudden misfortune has upon the mind an effect like that of a flash of lightning on the eyes: for an instant only it illumines with supernatural clearness every object within the range of vision, and then leaves the dazzled sight bewildered in a deeper obscurity than before. Such was the case with my mental faculties; I comprehended at once the full horror of the precipice on which I stood,—Lilith's sacrifice, Carmen's constancy, my friend's generosity and delicacy,—the next moment I was in the darkness of despair.

Lilith, speechless, saw me on the point of fainting. Overwhelmed as she was by the discovery she had made, she yet had strength to recover her presence of mind in time to prevent my falling. She supported me when I ought to have supported her; but my agony was so much the more intense that, in the confusion of my brain, I could not avoid

doubting whether I myself had not been the sole cause of blame in the crisis we had arrived at. Lilith, on the other hand, confiding, gentle, secure in her youth and ignorance of the world, had trusted every thing to me,—her heart, her future happiness were at my feet. She could have not the shadow of a reproach to make to herself in having listened to my sincere, though, it now seemed, too precipitate passion.

There we stood, a few minutes before two of the happiest mortals whom this earth contained, now rendered, by the perusal of a few short lines from a distant land, two of the most miserable.

Lilith, trembling, silently took my arm, and led me slowly towards the house. We had still some little way to walk, when, in a low and unsteady voice, she uttered the words "Dear Ambrose.".....

The sound of her soft voice awoke me as if from a horrid dream : a gleam of heavenly light seemed once more to cross my path. The silence had become painful ; utterly powerless as I was to break it, the sweet accents, to which of late I had become so well accustomed, sunk deep into my heart.

"Dear Ambrose," she continued, "be calm ; com-

pose yourself, and seek comfort and counsel in God. We have both need to pray to Him for light as to what we ought now to do, and for aid and strength to do that which He points out to us. We may, we must be, in fearful doubt, difficulty, and trouble ; submission to what He ordains is now our only duty."

Her words, like those of an angel, soothed my feelings for the moment ; but when she had brought me quietly to my own apartment, when she sat by my side in my hitherto peaceful study—where we had talked over our plans—now baseless phantoms—of future life and promised bliss—my grief broke out afresh, and as I watched the ill-suppressed tears steal down her marble cheeks, I yielded to my weakness, and buried my face in her hands.

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